THE

OLD WOMAN.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE HORRORS OF OAKENDALE ABBEY.

"Fear on guilt attends, and deeds of darkneſs;
. . . . . a ous breaſt ne'er knows it."

HAVARD.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
AT THE
Minerva-Preſs,
BY WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.
1800.

BRITISH LIBRARY

THE OLD WOMAN.

LETTER I.

Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.

Arkley Caſtle, July 23, 1797.

THIS has been a long ſilence, my dear Elinor; but the occaſion muſt plead for my forgiveneſs.—I promiſed, in my haſte, to write immediately, and I then fully intended it. Indeed, for the firſt few hours after we ſeparated, I thought every little occurrence would be worth relating, and appeared ſuch as would intereſt my Elinor. Since that time my mind has been in a whirl of variety and confuſion, and ſcarce a

moment has been allowed to my heart to aſcertain either its pains or its pleaſures. I have, during this time, written anſwers to a multitude of congratulatory notes and epiſtles, all of which expreſſed the ſame uniform hackneyed ſentiments. If chance has thrown any of them in your way, and you form a judgment from their language, you will have nothing more to expect; nothing either to hope or fear; for they pronounce me the happieſt of mortals.—Alas! my friend, they are indeed the dictates of my pen; would that my heart could as eaſily ſubſcribe to ſuch ſentiments. You have a right to all its ſincerity; and I am now writing, not from the outward forms of etiquette, but the inward feelings of a mind undiſguiſed and open to your cenſure or applauſe.

From a very early period of our lives, you have been acquainted with all its weakneſſes, all its follies, and may form ſome judgment of its preſent ſtate; and yet, I think, you cannot have quite

quite a juſt idea of my preſent ſituation, or one at all equal to the agitation of my mind;—I had almoſt ſaid, to its tortures. Ah my friend! it is not too ſtrong a word. When in the aweful marriage ſervice Mr. Goodworth pronounced that ſentence which muſt ſtrike all thinking people with hope or fear; when with that ſtern piety and emphaſis for which he is ſo juſtly admired, he ſaid "I require "and charge you both, as ye ſhall anſwer "it at the dreadful day of judgment, "when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be "diſcloſed," &c. &c. What at that moment did my mind undergo! You, my Elinor, are the only perſon who can form ſome judgment of its emotion, for well you know its weak propenſities, and yet whatever you may ſuppoſe, will fall ſhort of its agitation. Simpleton that I was! I was upon the point of ſtopping the ceremony—I was going to cry aloud there was an impediment—I was going to utter ſuch things!—but my good or evil genius (as it may henceforth prove) pre-

vented me, and my trembling hand and faultering voice reſigned, and fixed my fate for ever.

You know how much I ever deſpiſed and reprobated thoſe diſguſting airs of affectation and deſign, which are not unfrequently practiſed by thoſe whoſe hearts are firmly attached, and who would be indeed wretched were they to be divided. This was not the caſe with me. My agitated heart and trembling hand were but faint emblems of my diſtracted feelings.—Yet, ought I to breathe ſuch a confeſſion? Only to you, my friend, who know all the ſecrets of my ſoul, would I dare thus to expreſs myſelf. Nay, I have ſet bounds even to my ideas; but there are moments when they ſtray beyond thoſe limits, and never ſo much as when I am addreſſing you, who, knowing all my failings, will make all due allowances for a divided, torn, and wounded heart. It is when I am writing to you, that my thoughts flow faſter than my pen can expreſs them; and ſurely I may not be denied

denied this relief from the cruel anguiſh of diſſimulation, in which I ſeem ſo involved, that I fear it will become habitual.—How am I dwelling upon retroſpection, when I ſhould be relating events, and deſcribing thoſe circumſtances of joy and ſplendor, by which the heart of a bride is generally elated! Not a word neither of my huſband, who ſhould now be the chief object of my contemplations; and indeed, he is truly deſerving of more praiſe and gratitude than I can give. He is kind, tender, and affectionate. I could even wiſh he were leſs ſo; for then my own duplicity would not give me ſo much pain.—After we left you, he uſed every attentive endeavour to reconcile me to my ſituation, and very kindly attributed all my agitation to extreme ſenſibility.

During our journey to Arkley Caſtle, he pointed out all the beauties of the country through which we paſſed. It abounded in hills, rich dales, beautiful woods, and diſtant views, all of which were juſtly worthy of my admiration; and

the ſetting ſun gilding the proſpects, formed a truly pictureſque and fine ſcene. The caſtle is a ſtately old building, of an immenſe ſize. I had never ſeen it ſince I was about eight years of age, when the mind is too young for much obſervation, and receives no impreſſions beyond thoſe of the moment. It was therefore new to me, and the ſuperb magnificence of its ſize and its antiquity inſpired me with awe, not altogether void of terror; for I remembered ſome idle ſtories of ghoſts, which never fail to excite the attention of a child, and which the uninhabited part of the ſtructure appears well calculated to inſpire. I could have given way to my fears, had they not been diſpelled by the ring of bells from the pariſh-church, the ſhouts of the peaſants who ſurrounded the caſtle, expreſſing every mark of ruſtic congratulation, and all the clamorous joy of the domeſtics, ſome of whom I remembered, and they all ſeemed to ſhow me the moſt marked reſpect, and to look upon me as a being of ſupe-

ſuperior order. I hope I received all theſe compliments properly, but my mind was in a chaos of confuſion, and I fear I acquitted myſelf with an ill grace.

The following day St. Edward led me through all the apartments, and in a cloſet he opened a cabinet, which was our grandmother's, and preſented me with a ſuperb necklace, ear-rings, and croſs, of the fineſt brilliants I ever beheld. How would they have dazzled the imagination, and pleaſed the ſight of moſt women, particularly when preſented by a young and handſome huſband, who likewiſe accompanied the action with ſaying, "Theſe, my Julia, were the "jewels of our grandmother, and when "they are new ſet, will be an ornament to "thoſe charms, which will nevertheleſs "eclipſe their luſtre." What a compliment! yet I received them with trembling hands and faultering thanks. The idea of *our* grandmother made me ſhudder. Ah my friend, firſt couſins are too nearly allied to marry. The ſon of my uncle—the

nephew of my father—the ſame blood—only two removes from a parent—much the ſame as marrying my brother:—how repugnant not only to the laws of nature, but to the nicer feelings of the heart. Perhaps you have heard theſe ſentiments from me before, and perhaps they are ſtrengthened by the ſingularity of my fate. I will not pretend to ſay how that may be, but I think even my fondeſt attachment would be leſſened by the knowledge of relationſhip. This is not a time, however, to make theſe reflections, nor ſhould I have been led to have mentioned them at all, had not particular circumſtances awakened ſuch ideas.

Yeſterday, as I ſtrolled through the gallery of family portraits, the figures of my father and uncle upon the ſame canvas, animated by the hand of the artiſt, ſeemed to poſſeſs the ſame ſoul. Here they were figured as children; but when they were repreſented in different pictures, and grown up, the ſame features, the

the ſame expreſſion of countenance, ſhewed their relationſhip, and gave me a diſguſting thought that the ſon of either ſhould be my huſband. We were certainly kindred bodies before our marriage, and now ought to be kindred ſouls;—but does this follow? Alas! I am running into a ſtrain it was my intention to avoid.—I ſhould have told you of our numerous viſitors—of going to church—of a thouſand things I meant to have ſaid; but I have already treſpaſſed on your time, and devoted too much of my own to ideas which are to have no place in my future reflections. Let me hear from you, let me know the welfare of all thoſe moſt dear to you; allow me this indulgence, my Elinor, and believe me

Ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

LETTER II.

Mrs. Safforey to Captain Safforey, at ——— West-Indies.

Ledcombe, July 31.

YOUR laſt letter, my deareſt George, brought me the beſt intelligence, and the greateſt pleaſure I can know in your abſence, that of your health. How have I offered up my grateful thanks to the Almighty for having preſerved you amidſt that peſtilence, which has been ſo fatal to ſo many of our brave countrymen. May the bleſſing be ſtill continued to me; it is my conſtant prayer, and I truſt will be heard; for, next to the protection of Heaven, your own temperance will be a great means of preſerving you from infection; and I hope your next accounts will be ſtill more favorable reſpecting the fate of our men.—My brother too; I have much to ſay concerning him; and I know not

not if the blow he may before this have received, may not be infinitely more ſevere than any pain of the body inflicted by the fever. If my intelligence is the earlieſt, break to him, my dear George, in the tendereſt manner you can, the marriage of Julia St. Edward. Yes, ſhe is now the wife of her couſin William St. Edward; nor do I ſee what could have prevented the indiſſoluble knot. Such a combination of circumſtances rendered their union ſo neceſſary, that I think if any broken vows can be forgiven, her ſituation ſeems to claim pardon. She is truly amiable, and will, I hope, be happy, although I have not much encouragement that my wiſhes will be effectual, if I may judge by a letter I received from her a few days after her marriage. Many of her ſentiments beſpoke a heart but ill at eaſe, yet ſhe mentioned her huſband handſomely, nay, even kindly. The great difficulty will be to keep him ignorant of her firſt prepoſſeſſion, and I fear ſhe has too upright a heart to be a good diſſembler.

LETTER II.

Mrs. Safforey to Captain Safforey, at ——— Weſt-Indies.

Ledcombe, July 31.

YOUR laſt letter, my deareſt George, brought me the beſt intelligence, and the greateſt pleaſure I can know in your abſence, that of your health. How have I offered up my grateful thanks to the Almighty for having preſerved you amidſt that peſtilence, which has been ſo fatal to ſo many of our brave countrymen. May the bleſſing be ſtill continued to me; it is my conſtant prayer, and I truſt will be heard; for, next to the protection of Heaven, your own temperance will be a great means of preſerving you from infection; and I hope your next accounts will be ſtill more favorable reſpecting the fate of our men.—My brother too; I have much to ſay concerning him; and I know not

not if the blow he may before this have received, may not be infinitely more ſevere than any pain of the body inflicted by the fever. If my intelligence is the earlieſt, break to him, my dear George, in the tendereſt manner you can, the marriage of Julia St. Edward. Yes, ſhe is now the wife of her couſin William St. Edward; nor do I ſee what could have prevented the indiſſoluble knot. Such a combination of circumſtances rendered their union ſo neceſſary, that I think if any broken vows can be forgiven, her ſituation ſeems to claim pardon. She is truly amiable, and will, I hope, be happy, although I have not much encouragement that my wiſhes will be effectual, if I may judge by a letter I received from her a few days after her marriage. Many of her ſentiments beſpoke a heart but ill at eaſe, yet ſhe mentioned her huſband handſomely, nay, even kindly. The great difficulty will be to keep him ignorant of her firſt prepoſſeſſion, and I fear ſhe has too upright a heart to be a good diſſembler.

I know not myſelf all the family reaſons and motives for this alliance, but I am promiſed to have the whole particulars related by Mrs. Clifford, who has had the care of Julia from the time ſhe loſt her mother; and to whoſe kindneſs and friendſhip I am myſelf greatly indebted. Not that I doubt my Julia;—I ſincerely believe ſhe has no reſerves from me;—I ſhould not ſo well love her if ſhe had:—for where confidence is leſſened either in love or friendſhip, the ardour of the paſſion dies away, till all is diminiſhed. This is a truth which experience will teach, and time will confirm; and I ſay it to you, my George, becauſe I know I can claim your confidence as long as I deſerve your love.

Mrs. Clifford is a ſenſible and a good woman, and will relate events impartially, and knows every circumſtance of the family. I fear you will fancy my ſtyle is that of impertinent curioſity, and that I have adopted the ſentiments of thoſe females, who are never eaſy but when they

are

are engaged in the buſineſs and concerns of other people; but be aſſured I have too well obſerved your admonitions to fall into that error. The preſent caſe is a particular one; and beſides that, I am, I confeſs, ſincerely intereſted for my friend, and anxious for all concerning her. Yet the feelings of my brother on this account, are not the leaſt of my reaſons for wiſhing to know why it was neceſſary that he ſhould loſe the beſt of women, and why her inclinations ſhould be ſacrificed to duty, or rather to obedience; and, perhaps, when he is well informed of the real truth, there may be circumſtances which may mitigate, if not perfectly heal, the wounds this intelligence will inflict.

I have dwelt ſo much on this ſubject, that I have allowed but little room for any other; indeed, the reſt is compriſed in affectionate wiſhes and tender love.—Of public events, you receive better accounts than I can give you, and I hope better than I hear.—One topic I reſerve for the

the laſt, as I uſed, when a girl, to preſerve my plumbs and ſweetmeats for a bonne bouche. It is our dear child!—he muſt have a place for himſelf, though ſo young. He is every day dearer to me by a million of charms which I conſtantly diſcover, but none which endears him ſo much as the likeneſs he bears to his beloved father. O my George, when I behold the likeneſs which is expreſſed in every feature, I gaze at him with rapture till the tears guſh from my eyes, and I am ready to exclaim on the cruelties of war, and all its train of ſeverities. Ah ſurely no acquiſitions can compenſate for the loſs of thouſands ſlain by the ſword, or left a prey to the ravages of diſeaſe. The cries of the widows and orphans muſt embitter the moments of victory, and diſpirit the braveſt troops. Theſe are reflections which are for ever uppermoſt in my mind.

May Heaven avert a continuance of the calamities of war, and preſerve my huſband to his Elinor, whoſe heart beats only for thoſe

thoſe moſt dear to her. Let me hear from you by every opportunity. Remember me kindly to my brother, my dear, my unhappy brother; and believe me, my dear George, all that the fondeſt wife can remain,

ELINOR SAFFOREY.

Accept loves and compliments from all friends, but they take up too much room to ſpecify them. Adieu.

LETTER III.

Lord Fitzarnold to Lord Robert Carrington.

CARRINGTON! I am fallen in love;—nothing but my own confeſſion would convince you of this. Yes, there is another conviction;—could you behold the divinity of my adoration, you would not for a moment doubt my aſſertion; nay, you would be in love yourſelf:—but beware of that, for I ſhould certainly in that caſe cut

cut your throat. No, I have a rival ſufficient in her huſband; for ſhe is a bride at preſent—a modeſt, timid, lovely, bluſhing bride; ſo no danger of matrimony for your friend, unleſs I effect a divorce, and even then I ſhall contrive to wave the galling fetters.

She is beautiful as an angel; but this is not all. I can view fleſh and blood, in its higheſt colouring, unmoved; but when animated by ſuch features!—eyes which beſpeak the emotions of the ſoul, with every attractive grace that can ornament the body!—it is not in human nature to reſiſt ſuch united charms. I expect you will tell me you have ſeen ſuch a thouſand times. No, Carrington, you never did. Yes, I have ſeen the fineſt complexion, the fineſt eyes, the moſt perfect ſymmetry of form, and yet I never before ſaw ſuch a model of perfection. Here are three fine girls in the ſame houſe with me; the eldeſt particularly handſome; but compared to Mrs. St. Edward (for that

that is her name) they are mere dowdies. Their eyes are continually upon the watch to ſee which feature is moſt regarded; their mouths are opened by certain rules; and their limbs are thrown into motion by a kind of mechanic rule, which conveys the idea of automatons moved by the ſprings of art, and robbing nature of her choiceſt gifts.

As Mrs. St. Edward has received from nature her moſt laviſh favors, ſo ſhe ſeems to return them by never departing from her precepts. Every ſentiment ſhe utters is natural; every motion, every geſture is natural; and every attitude in which ſhe places herſelf, ſeems directed by the moſt graceful natural eaſe. But I begin to anticipate thy wiſhes, which, methinks, lead thee to have leſs of deſcription, and more of her hiſtory. But I ſhall fail in the latter, for as yet I know it but imperfectly. St. Edward has been kept out of the poſſeſſion of the family eſtate by ſome derangements of economy, and a marriage with this ſweet creature was the terms of inheritance. They were no hard

condi-

conditions for him; for her I am not ſo clear. It ſeems ſhe ſhewed a reluctance to the union, but was a ſacrifice to duty and obedience, from a thorough conviction of the rules of propriety and rectitude. They are firſt couſins; and if I have any ſkill in phyſiognomy, or rather in the obſervations of the heart, he is not the man ſhe would have choſen for her huſband.

Good encouragement this for me, you will ſay. No; my vanity does nothing for me on this occaſion. She ſeems purity itſelf; and appears at leaſt to reverence her huſband—I am miſtaken if ſhe loves him. Not that he is an object by any means unlikely to inſpire the tender paſſion. He is handſome, well made, and what is generally termed agreeable. I ſhould conceive him to be quick, warm, and impetuous. His eyes ſeem rivetted to her charms; and when ſhe ſpeaks, he looks round with a conſcious value of his treaſure. I know not how the converſation turned upon the events in the Weſt-Indies; of the numbers

bers we had loſt there by the yellow fever. I ſat near her—I obſerved her eye—I obſerved her lovely boſom heave through her thin dreſs—and ſhe could not conceal a fluttering ſolicitude far exceeding common anxiety, when ſome officers were named who had fallen victims to the contagion. She ſaw I obſerved her; and the more ſhe tried to ſuppreſs her feelings, the more conſpicuous they appeared. It is a point gained to know the ſubject which moſt intereſts the heart of a female:—touch but the tender ſtring, and the vibration extends to all the ſoft chords, and beats with fond emotion.

When I am ſo happy as to be alone with her, I ſhall introduce the ſubject by the moſt pathetic lamentations for our dear countrymen. I ſhall pretend to have loſt a relation there, whom I ſhall bewail with the tendereſt pity; what if ſhe ſhould make me in return the confidante of her ſorrows: let her once entruſt me with a ſecret, and ſhe is mine. Yes, my fair-one, then thou art in my power; and

and well I know thy heart does not palpitate thus for a brother, or any of thy kindred blood. No, it is for ſome object infinitely more dear. Happy dog!—and my rival too,—deteſted fellow! I muſt contrive thy deſtruction, if no lucky chance will do it for me.

Now, Carrington, don't tell me I am wrong, for that I know already; but I muſt at leaſt indulge my wiſhes; and no other purſuit at preſent intereſts me. I am tired of every thing beſides; and if thou wilt not indulge me in my only favourite theme, I ſhall write to thee no more. Lovefield teazes me with the merits of his hunters, his hounds, and all the etceteras of the ſport; but I have no more reliſh for them than I have for the country dinners and cards of invitation, on which his wife is continually deſcanting. Nor can I, for my ſoul, admire the girls when they are thumping at the harpſichord, or ſtraining their throats for my amuſement. I am ſick of all. Even books have loſt their charms. Try thy

hand

hand at a letter, but write to me of Julia St. Edward, or I ſhall find no pleaſure in anything thou canſt relate.

Yours,

Baintree Park. FITZARNOLD.

LETTER IV.

Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.

Crayborne, Auguſt 2.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOUR laudable curioſity, and your kind wiſhes, ſhould have been ſooner anſwered, had not a variety of events intervened to prevent my writing, trifling in themſelves, perhaps, but ſuch as ſufficiently ſerved to diveſt my mind of thoſe powers of recollection neceſſary for the relation of events, in which I wiſh to be particularly minute.—When I am writing upon the ſubject of my dear Julia St. Edward, I am at once flattered

flattered and pleaſed; for the requeſt you have made encourages me to hope that I ſhall, from time to time, be made acquainted with occurrences, about which I muſt ever be particularly intereſted; and I am well aſſured, that, as you know the concern I take in the events of my Julia's life, the known goodneſs of your heart leaves me no doubt in believing, that you will favor me with any intelligence you may have relating to her.

I have known her from her childhood, and I know her to be all that is good and amiable. I likewiſe know all the ſecrets of her heart; and although I have every reaſon to believe ſhe would not wiſh to hide them from me, yet there is a diſtance which the difference of age always creates, and naturally places between that familiarity and unreſerve, which I know ſubſiſts between younger people, and is beſt adapted to that congeniality of ideas which a more advanced period of life renders leſs communicative. I do not

mean

mean to be underſtood by this, that I am unacquainted with the great ſecret of her heart; on the contrary, I know it well;—for me it ſhall ever remain one, and may it be always as ſacredly preſerved;—for to be divulged, would be abſolute ruin both to her and to her huſband's happineſs.—I only mean by the above ſentiments to make an intereſt in your favor, in the hope of your placing that confidence in me, of which I truſt you will find me deſerving, and which I cannot now ſo well claim from Mrs. St. Edward herſelf.

Pardon, dear madam, my running into length upon a ſubject ſo evident, as well as detaining you from a relation of circumſtances, about which you are ſo deſirous to be informed.——It is not my intention to enter into a detail of my own misfortunes, farther than may be neceſſary to elucidate the hiſtory of thoſe, concerning whoſe fate you are ſo juſtly ſolicitous.——I am the widow of an officer who fell early in the American war of 1776;—ſince that period every event has appeared

appeared to me comparatively ſmall. We had been married only a few months, but years had impreſſed the knowledge of each others hearts, and the virtues we fondly ſuppoſed they each poſſeſſed; for we loved too well to be ſenſible of faults in either.—The firſt few months after I received the fatal intelligence of my huſband's death, I was incapable of attending to anything. I wept inceſſantly; and the petition I made in my daily prayers was for a ſpeedy death to end my ſufferings. Impatience under afflictions was a crime I had not then learned to ſubdue, and a long and ſevere illneſs was a juſt puniſhment for my murmurs againſt the all-wiſe Diſpenſer of events.—I had chiefly reſided in the neighbourhood of Arkley Caſtle, and from a very early age I was impreſſed with an idea of the riches and goodneſs of its inhabitants. I have but a very faint remembrance of the old gentleman and lady, but a grand funeral for their only daughter dwelt upon my recollection; and during my childhood I remember liſtening to the current reports of

their

their two ſurviving children being wild, diſſipated, and extravagant; that the timber was cut down to ſupply them with money, and that when their profuſion and ill conduct had made a mortgage upon the eſtate a neceſſary meaſure, I heard my uncle ſay, he was ſure it would be the death of the old people, who had lived ſo many years in ſuch high reſpectability, practiſing the virtues of charity and benevolence in their fulleſt extent. They never left their home; and if their lives were not marked by elegance of manners, and ſuperiority of knowledge, they were nevertheleſs eminent for the good example they ſet. The moſt unbounded hoſpitality was the reſult of excellent economy; and the whole tenor of their lives exemplified all the Chriſtian virtues.

The old gentleman had been perſuaded to give his ſons a very liberal education; they were, therefore, ſent to the public ſeminaries of learning, where mixing with the moſt extravagant aſſociates, and being allowed unlimited

power to draw for what ſums they pleaſed, (the old people being utterly unacquainted with the depravity of the times), they ſoon made ſuch demands as occaſioned vaſt and cruel depredations on this once rich and valuable domain, and reduced it to the ſtate before mentioned. The old gentleman and lady ſurvived each other but a few days. The loſs of their daughter, and the folly of their ſons, haſtening the debt of nature, they died in a premature old age, lamenting that they had not brought up their ſons in the ſimplicity and ignorance of their forefathers. What remained of the eſtate was remitted to theſe young men, who were ſquandering it in every act of extravagance and diſſipation, never coming to the caſtle, great part of which was entirely ſhut up, and only an old part of it was reſerved for the habitation of three old ſervants, who were allowed ſome ſmall portion out of the eſtate for the remainder of their lives.

I was then in the fifteenth year of my age; ſtories of the horrible kind are then

then moſt apt to excite the attention. I liſtened with avidity to tales of ghoſts and ſpectres, which the appearance of the caſtle in ſome degree authorized ;—the approach to it was overgrown with weeds, the trees darkened the avenues, the rooks flew about in armies, the battlements were broken and crumbling to decay, and time had made cruel devaſtation throughout the whole building. Often have I looked through the broken caſements in the daytime (for at night no one would venture) with an eager curioſity, expecting and almoſt wiſhing to behold ſome of the airy forms, of which I had heard ſuch marvellous accounts from the common people in the vicinity. I could, however, never diſcover any thing but a ſcene of deſolation, which ſeemed to pervade the whole building.

Soon after this period, the youngeſt of the brothers, Godfrey St. Edward, took a ſmall houſe in the village where my uncle then reſided. He brought his wife and an only daughter, then a child, the preſent Mrs. Julia St. Edward. They

remained in this place about two years, during which time I contracted an intimacy with Mrs. Godfrey St. Edward; and the young Julia, though many years younger than myſelf, always expreſſed a partiality for me. At the death of Godfrey St. Edward, which was occaſioned by a fall from his horſe, Mrs. St. Edward and her daughter left the country, ſoon afterwards I left it alſo; and during that period of happineſs, which was confined to a very ſhort ſpace, I was entirely abſent from this county; and before my return, my worthy uncle was removed to Crayborne, where Mrs. Godfrey St. Edward, then a widow, ſoon took a ſmall houſe, and reſided there with Julia. The latter was much improved, and promiſed all thoſe graces and beauty for which ſhe is now ſo univerſally admired.

There had always appeared a ſhade of melancholy over the features of Mrs. St. Edward, which conveyed the idea of miſery, when I was a ſtranger to it. Now that my mind had experienced the greateſt

greateſt of all misfortunes, in the loſs of a kind and tender huſband, I was more alive to the feelings of others; and her recent loſs ſtill adding to her melancholy, we became more cloſely united by misfortune; and although I never knew or pried into the ſecret cauſes of her grief, I frequently heard her ſay, ſhe laboured under a ſecret which ſhe wiſhed to reveal, but durſt not. It certainly preyed upon her health; and my ſpirits were but juſt beginning to recover, when they were again deeply oppreſſed by the death of Mrs. St. Edward. She very earneſtly recommended her daughter to mine and my uncle's care, obſerving that quarterly remittances would be ſent by her uncle, William St. Edward, for her uſe; and that he was to have the ſole direction concerning her in future. Mrs. St. Edward died, as ſhe had lived, oppreſſed with ſome ſecret, which, I have reaſon to think, was buried with her, as I never heard her daughter allude to it, nor do I believe

ſhe had any ſuſpicion either of that, or of her own deſtiny.

The diſtance of Crayborne from Arkley rendered the caſtle too remote to be an object of contemplation. It was ſeldom mentioned; nor did we for a length of time hear any thing of Mr. William St. Edward, except that he was punctual in ſending the remittances to my uncle. He never came to Crayborne, although it was ſaid he every year viſited the caſtle, which, in conſequence, had undergone ſome repairs. He was a widower, with one ſon, who, it was reported, would reſide at Arkley when he became of age. As to Julia, ſhe was a compoſition of all that was lovely. Her viſits to you conſtituted her chief happineſs; and the knowledge I had of your family gave me the higheſt opinion of every branch of it. Julia ſpoke of your brother as the counterpart of yourſelf, and I had no need of a higher encomium. When Mr. Delafore accompanied you to Crayborne, during the time you

you were on a viſit there, I immediately ſaw he had no common ſhare in her eſteem; and at that time I apprehended no evil from an attachment which ſeemed to promiſe all that was deſirable.

Soon after this period, Mr. William St. Edward arrived at Crayborne, late in the evening. Julia was then on a viſit at your houſe. Never ſhall I forget the agitated appearance of Mr. St. Edward; his looks beſpoke the perturbation of his mind. He had a long conference with my uncle; and when he took his leave, I heard him in a peremptory tone, yet trembling voice, enforce ſomething of an important nature to my uncle, whoſe melancholy looks and unuſual manner indicated the agitation which the abrupt and unexpected viſit of Mr. St. Edward had occaſioned. He did not make me acquainted with what had paſſed, but appeared to be muſing on ſomething very perplexing. He ſaid that Julia muſt immediately be ſent for home; intimating that he was ſorry ſhe had ever paſſed ſo much

time where it appeared ſhe had formed an attachment which muſt now be given up.

"Yes," added my dear uncle, "the "fate of Julia has been fixed by her "father and her uncle long before ſhe was "capable of diſtinguiſhing the nature of "choice. The moſt ſolemn vows were "made by each brother that their children "ſhould be united. Mr. St. Edward has "this day repeated his oath, and enjoined "me to ſee it fulfilled. I repreſented to "him the cruelty, nay, even the ſin of "forcing the will, which the heart did not "ſanction; but he would not admit my "argument. He appears to be agitated "by enthuſiaſtic zeal; ſays he has too "long neglected the completion of their "vow, and has been warned by a departed "ſpirit to haſten the ratification, as the "only terms of peace to a mind torn by "affliction.—What," ſaid my uncle, "can "be offered to a man under the influence "of ſuch a perſuaſion? You muſt pre-"pare Julia for the reception of her couſin,

"who

" who will be here in a few days; after " which, you are to inform her that he is " to be her huſband; that nothing can " alter the decree; and ſhe muſt ſhortly be " miſtreſs of Arkley Caſtle."

What a taſk was mine (who ſo well knew the influence of the tender paſſions,) to endeavour to root it from her heart! yet, faithful to the truſt repoſed in me, I repreſented to her, in the moſt perſuaſive language, the neceſſity of her compliance. My uncle alſo enforced the ſame doctrine, while his heart bled for her miſery.—Never can I forget the day ſhe was informed of her father's will. She had then ſeen her preſent huſband, young William St. Edward, and had been ſpeaking of him with that affectionate regard their relationſhip warranted; when my uncle told her ſhe muſt entertain a ſtill more tender love for him, and that he muſt be her huſband.—It was evident what an intereſt ſhe had gained in his heart, for he

had ſpoken of her with rapture.—She abſolutely ſhuddered with affright.

" No—no—no!" ſhe repeated, " never! " What, the ſon of my uncle!—Save, pro- " tect me from ſuch a fate:" and then, as if more determined—" My will," ſaid ſhe, " cannot be forced. My heart is not mine " to beſtow; it is given to the worthieſt of " men; the moſt pious vows have ſealed " the covenant, and Heaven would puniſh " perjury like that of breaking them. My " uncle never could approve it—nor you, " my friends; and why torture me with " fears of ſuch a nature?" She ſeemed now to aſſume a countenance ſo ſatisfied, that my uncle could not then urge the ſubject farther, but only ſaid, in his mild perſuaſive tones, " We will talk this matter " over at ſome future time; till when, my " dear child, be compoſed, and truſt in " the wiſe Diſpoſer of all events for hap- " pineſs in this world, as well as in that " which is to come, for he alone can

" give

"give it."—She ſtood like a trembling victim, with the tears running down her cheeks, and ſeemed to have loſt every power of exertion. My own feelings were little better than her's; her diſtreſs recalled to my mind ideas of too tender a nature to admit of my offering her conſolation, and the ſubject was not reſumed again for ſome days; nor had my uncle either ſpirits or inclination to attempt it, till a letter from Mr. St. Edward again pointed out the neceſſity of the caſe, when it was again renewed, and enforced by the moſt gentle and kind perſuaſions. It was repreſented to her that, by refuſing to comply with the will of her father, ſhe deprived herſelf of all inheritance whatſoever, as by ſome unacccountable agreement between the brothers, that circumſtance made a part of the contract.

She heard theſe remonſtrances and expoſtulations with the ſame anguiſh as before; ſhe endeavoured alſo to preſerve the ſame firmneſs; and ſhe offered to relinquiſh all right and claim to any part of her ſhare in

the inheritance, and give it up, without the ſmalleſt reſerve, to her uncle and her couſin, if by ſo doing, ſhe might preſerve her liberty, and not be compelled in her choice. "Yes," ſaid ſhe, (wringing her hands,) "leave me deſtitute even of the neceſ-"ſaries of life; let me procure my liveli-"hood by the work of my hands—let me "be any thing but a perjured wretch. Oh "Sir, I have vowed to be the wife of Henry "Delafore, and never to be another's; "he has declared the ſame to me; and "Heaven has witneſſed our plighted faith. "Can any inſtitution, even ſo ſacred as that "of marriage, ſet aſide vows like theſe?"

My uncle was prepared for this offer, and aſſured her it would not be accepted. He told her, hard was the taſk impoſed on him, to endeavour to alter ſentiments ſo reſolved, and inclinations ſo attached; but ſince he knew her fate to be ſo inevitably fixed, and ſince her couſin had declared his violent love for her, he ſtill wiſhed ſhe could bring her mind to that degree of compli-ance, as would make what was an irrevo-

cable

cable deſtiny appear like a duteous choice. He repreſented the ſhortneſs of life, and how valueleſs the choiceſt of its bleſſings were, when compared with the rewards of duty and obedience in that which would be everlaſting. Above all, he urged the ſtrongeſt reaſons to prevent her from giving Mr. St. Edward the moſt diſtant idea of her attachment to your brother; and as that gentleman had been abſent ſo many months without any accounts of his ſafety being received, he ventured to hint at the probability of his having fallen a victim, amongſt the multitude of others, to the unfavourable climate whither he was gone, and this was ſtill more to be feared, as he had never written a ſyllable either to her or to any of his friends. She could not bear this idea; and her ſufferings were greater than I can deſcribe.

It would be only a repetition to dwell upon the arguments my uncle uſed to enforce the neceſſity of her compliance, and the conſtant refuſal ſhe gave and perſevered

ſevered in for a length of time, and which no perſuaſions ſeemed to leſſen; and I am firmly perſuaded that when ſhe did at laſt conſent, it was in a perfect belief that ſhe ſhould not ſurvive the conflict it occaſioned in her mind.

Three days before her marriage took place, ſhe aſked me if I did not think her looks much changed. I told her ſhe was thin, but not leſs lovely. "Oh Mrs. Clif-" ford!" ſhe replied, "leſs tortures than "my mind has ſuffered, would have de-" prived many people of life; but I am "not to die; it pleaſes the Almighty "to prolong my exiſtence, although I have "ſo ardently prayed for a period to it. My "father and his brother," ſhe continued, "entered into a ſolemn agreement it ſeems, "that their children ſhould be united, in "order to cancel the obligations they were "under to each other. My couſin and my-" ſelf, the innocent offspring of two unhappy "fathers, were made the victims of their "raſh vows, which, I underſtand, were

"rendered

" rendered ſacred by the moſt awful oaths
" and dreadful imprecations of everlaſting
" happineſs or miſery to the ſurvivor, if
" they were not fulfilled;—and ſhall ſo poor
" a creature as I am dare to break a covenant
" like this?—No;—my preſent deſign is to
" marry my couſin, and render myſelf a
" ſacrifice to their vows. Cruel, indeed,
" has been the conflict; nor were the vows
" I made leſs binding, though they impli-
" cated no curſes on poſterity.—I have
" prayed (I hope they were not preſump-
" tuous prayers) that death would have
" decided my fate before I had given the
" fatal promiſe. Heaven has pleaſed to
" order it otherwiſe, and I ſubmit to its
" decrees. Your good uncle has com-
" forted me with the aſſurance that my
" ſubmiſſion will be rewarded, at leaſt by
" an approving conſcience. But of this—
" Oh! my friend, do not I break a vow as
" ſacred as any my father could have
" made? and am I not more immediately
" anſwerable for that than for any other?

" Whither

"Whither do theſe ideas lead me? Oh "hide me from myſelf!"—She then reſted her head upon my ſhoulder with a ſigh that pierced my heart, and I would have given worlds to have comforted her, but tears choked my utterance; I could not articulate words ſufficient to expreſs my ſentiments. She ſaw my diſtreſs, withdrew her face from my boſom, and ſoon quitted the room. I had not any more converſation with her on the ſubject; we ſeemed both to make a point of avoiding it; and on the day ſhe was married, ſhe aſſumed a placid appearance, except during the ceremony, when ſhe ſeemed much agitated. She left us ſoon afterwards; and when I ſaluted her cheek on taking leave, it felt as cold as marble; but ſhe preſerved an eaſy and not altogether uncheerful countenance.—Pray heaven ſhe may be compoſed; happy I dare not ſuppoſe. From your friendſhip I know ſhe will derive great conſolation; her own good ſenſe will regulate her conduct; and I have every reaſon

to

to believe ſhe is married to a man who truly loves her. She aſked me to write to her, and to viſit her when my uncle could ſpare me. As yet I have done neither. In writing I could ſay nothing that would not in ſome degree, recal former remembrances; and I think the more new ſcenes in which ſhe is engaged, the better.

I fear the length of this letter will tire you, but I have a pleaſure in obeying your requeſt upon a ſubject in which I am too much intereſted to be limited. I truſt it will need no further apology. I ſhall think myſelf much favored, if you will have the goodneſs to inform me of any particulars you may chance to know concerning Mrs. St. Edward; and I remain,

Dear Madam,
Your truly obliged and
obedient ſervant,
ANN CLIFFORD.

LETTER V.

Lord Robert Carrington to Lord Fitzarnold.

Brighton, Auguſt 2, 17—.

DEAR FITZARNOLD,

YOUR letter was forwarded to me at this place. I wiſh you were here, or (I had almoſt ſaid) at any other than your preſent reſidence. This I know would have given a ſcope to your wit.—You inſiſt upon my writing to you of Julia St. Edward; ſo I will, and no other ſubject ſhall have a place in my letter. Does it not pleaſe you? I think I cannot pay her a higher compliment.—You deſire me not to tell you, you are wrong, for you ſay you know it;—why then, I ſhall ſpare myſelf the trouble: but you do not prohibit me from ſaying, *I am right*, and that I will proceed to prove.

You

You ſay Julia St. Edward is not happy; and yet, inſtead of endeavouring to reſtore her happineſs, you are ſtudying the means of making her more wretched; for as you ſuppoſe her to be virtuous, you may reſt aſſured, that every attempt you make to ſhake that principle, will not only contribute to her misfortunes, but at the ſame time defeat your own purpoſe. If ſhe entertains a partiality for ſome diſtant friend, you may be very certain, as a woman of virtue, ſhe is uſing her utmoſt efforts to correct and ſubdue every idea that is not conſiſtent with the purity of her heart; and will you raiſe obſtacles to this deſign? Will you light up the embers of a (perhaps) dying flame, and which, after all, may only exiſt in your wild imagination? Even were it otherwiſe, how would you be benefited by recalling remembrances forbidden and prohibited, and which, but for you, had been forgotten. It muſt at leaſt be bad policy to introduce a rival in the breaſt where you ſeek an intereſt for yourſelf.

ſelf.—This is reaſoning you cannot diſallow, which your judgment muſt approve, though your wiſhes may condemn. Leave, then, Mrs. St. Edward to the protection of her huſband, and to thoſe peaceful virtues which are the reward of an innocent heart, and haſten from the faſcinating object to thy ever faithful friend,

ROBERT CARRINGTON.

LETTER VI.

Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. St. Edward.

Ledcombe, Auguſt 19, 17—.

YOUR letter, my dear Julia, ſhould not have remained ſo long unanſwered, but I knew you did not expect from me a formal congratulation; neither was I willing to break in upon the many engagements and new avocations which muſt neceſſarily occupy

occupy the hours of a bride, particularly in the ſituation you ſo deſervedly fill. You will judge of the ſincerity of my heart, by the kind of letter I ſhall write to you; for I ſtudy no forms when I am addreſſing my deareſt friend: I write juſt what comes into my head, as I uſed to do, for I hope, my dear Julia, our friendſhip will continue the ſame as it ever was; indeed, I ſee no reaſon why it ſhould not. I know you are incapable of changing, and I know my own heart; but beſides this, your own dear huſband ſaid, he ſhould always value my friendſhip, and hoped it would for ever be continued. I am perſuaded, my Julia, you are a happy woman. I will hear none of your gloomy ſentiments. You are the envy of your ſex. How many females are there who would gladly be in your ſituation! Miſs Langton told me, ſhe never ſaw ſo handſome a man as Mr. St. Edward, and that when you drove paſt their houſe, ſhe thought it was the lot of very few to be ſo happy: indeed the value of a kind

and

and tender huſband is incalculable. Tell me no more fooliſh nonſenſe about firſt couſins :—where did you pick up ſuch obſolete notions? How many inſtances do I know of firſt couſins marrying, and being perfectly happy. Why ſhould they not? In former ages it was conſidered a crime not to take a wife of our own kindred, and it is ſaid to have grieved the hearts of the parents when their ſons went out to ſee "*the daughters of the land.*" Really, my dear, I ſhould have ſuppoſed that part of your letter to have been written by your nurſe, or ſome ſuperanuated old woman, and not by the pen of Julia St. Edward. Away with ſuch ſuperſtition, never to be tolerated but in thoſe days when we were ſilly girls, and uſed to conſult dame Freeford upon the fortunes which were to mark our lives, and fancied ſhe could tell us future events by poring into the grounds of a coffee-cup, or reading our deſtiny in a dirty pack of cards. Methinks I ſee her now ſpitting on her thumbs, and relating won-

wonderful things of the lovers we were each to captivate; the profuſion of riches which were to be ſhowered upon us; of the delightful journies we were to take, or the ſuperb preſents which awaited us; with a thouſand other promiſes, equally idle and ridiculous. Yet in thoſe youthful hours we were as pleaſed with the old woman's predictions, as we were with dreſſing our dolls at a ſtill earlier period.

But a few years, my Julia, make as great an alteration in our ſentiments as in our perſons; and we look back upon them with wonder, that our minds could ever have received amuſement from any trifles of this nature. As we grow to a more mature age, reaſon expands, and we conſider thoſe juvenile days, not leſs happy perhaps, but, very inferior to the more intereſting purſuits which then occupy our minds. I know not any perſon whoſe proſpects promiſe fairer than your's. You are united to a man who appears to adore you, and by this union you are entitled to that fortune, which not only

only gives you the ample enjoyment of the good things of this world, but enables you to diffuſe, with a liberal hand, thoſe bleſſings to objects which may want or merit them.

You are placed in the ſeat of your anceſtors, to honour their memory by imitating their example. No profeſſion calls your huſband from your arms: unleſs by choice, you need never be ſeparated. No hoſtile mandate tears him away, nor between you does a boiſtrous ocean roll. Theſe, my Julia, are ineſtimable bleſſings, and which you will, I hope, juſtly prize. Theſe will bind you by ſtronger ties than even duty and obedience. Affection will rivet them; and you will look with pity upon thoſe who feel almoſt the pains of misfortune under the dread of uncertainty; and none but thoſe who ſuffer them, can tell how bitter is the potion. From evils like theſe you will be exempt; and amidſt the choiceſt of your comforts, you may anticipate a race of St. Edwards adorned with virtues like

your

your own. You will be engaged in the delightful taſk of forming their minds to all that is lovely and good. I am the more anxious to have this wiſh realized, becauſe it muſt be that of your huſband. You are the only remaining branches of the family. Your uncle, from not having been heard of ſo long, is either dead, or living in ſome retirement, ſecluded from all belonging to him; and there is every reaſon to ſuppoſe he will never more viſit Arkley Caſtle. Indeed, I underſtand, he made ſome ſuch reſolution when he was laſt there; and the laſt years he has paſſed, have been marked by ſuch a train of eccentric ideas and odd fancies, that I ſhould not be ſurpriſed to hear he was turned hermit, and would never aſſociate again with his fellow creatures.

I beg you will write to me as often as you have leiſure or opportunity. Be aſſured that no one living can be more intereſted in your happineſs than I am, which I entreat you will promote, as well for your own ſake as for your huſband's. The wel-

fare of both will chiefly reſt in your power, and from you much will be expected. You have always been held out as a pattern to all that was amiable in the unmarried ſtate:—in the married one you have an opportunity of being more conſpicuouſly eminent. Let me, then, hear no more of your woes: you are, I am perſuaded, too good a Chriſtian to repine at a fate for which ſo many are inclined to envy you, and would gladly make an exchange with you. Let me have the pleaſure of hearing that you will approve and take my counſel, which will afford the ſincereſt ſatisfaction to

Your faithful

ELINOR SAFFOREY.

LETTER VII.

Lord Fitzarnold to Lord Robert Carrington.

Baintree Park, September 2, 17—.

YOUR letter, Carrington, has not made an atom of difference in my ſentiments or my deſigns: you know I told you it would not. You meant it well, my friend, but you have never ſeen my Julia. Yes, my Julia! I will have it ſo. Mine ſhe muſt be, the Fates have ſo ordained it; and you know there is no reſiſting their decrees. Beſides, it would be too much for ſuch a fellow as St. Edward to poſſeſs entirely a jewel of ſuch magnitude and brilliancy; it would be abſolute monopoly. Yet don't think I rave; I am acting methodically; and I will endeavour to arrange my plans, and to write them in order.

Carrington, I have converſed with Julia on a tender ſubject; one, too, that is next

her heart. I was right in my conjecture: ſhe is not married to her love. She did not tell me this in expreſs words, but what ſhe ſaid amounted to an avowal of it; and yet ſhe has more ſenſe than all the females I ever converſed with; and I had almoſt ſaid, more prudence. But againſt that thou wouldſt have cried out, "I wiſh you "would come here, and engage the girls "here from perſecuting one, when I could "wiſh to be otherwiſe employed." Miſs Lovefield abſolutely makes advances, and I ſhould have no great trouble to have her, I believe, upon any terms: but no!—one diſhonorable purſuit is ſufficient at a time. You ſee I do not pretend to palliate, and call it by any name it does not deſerve. And, indeed, when the heart is deeply engaged, as mine undoubtedly is, the attentions of all other women are impertinent and diſguſting. I can but juſt bring myſelf within the rules of common decency and complaiſance.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lovefield is quite the country ſquire's lady. Her vulgariſms are extreme; and ſhe has not the moſt diſtant idea of elegance. Such a fine creature as Mrs. St. Edward ſeems beyond her comprehenſion, and therefore ſhe abuſes that angel, and ſays, "I don't know how 'tis, but "there ſeems to me to be ſomething mon-"ſtrous awkward in that Mrs. St. Edward. "She is ſo grave and formal. She cer-"tainly has not ſeen much of the world. "No; ſhe has none of the eaſe of a perſon "of faſhion, and there is no being intimate "with her."

No;—well I know there is not, for Julia is of a different order of beings from this woman, who thinks good breeding conſiſts in being familiar, and calling all her neighbours Mrs. G. and Mrs. B.; and then alludes to ſome ſilly joke, of which the reſt of the company are ignorant. She has likewiſe, in ſome degree, taught her daughters this pretty ſort of behaviour; for they ſtretch their mouths from ear to ear, and nod and

look ſignificant; with a hundred other grimaces with which my ſweet Julia is as little accquainted as they are with her excellencies. I could not hear her named with diſreſpect; and therefore told my ſlanderous hoſteſs (with as much civility as I could muſter, after ſuch an affront to my feelings,) that ſhe had entirely miſtaken the character of Mrs. St. Edward; that ſhe was reſerved from diffidence, and grave from habit and modeſt good breeding. But they all ſtared as if they did not underſtand me; and I was afraid to be too elaborate in her praiſe, leaſt they might take whims in their heads which I would on no account engender.

During this converſation, my friend Lovefield enjoyed a comfortable repoſe, an indulgence he never fails to yield to ſoon after dinner, unleſs the ſports of the field or the merits of his hunters are the ſubject. He has, however, kind ſoul! invited me to ſtay during the ſhooting ſeaſon; and were his ſlumbers prolonged, his wife's

vulgarity

vulgarity increaſed, and the daughters perſecutions inſupportable, I would ſtill accept his invitation, for it places me in the vicinity of all that is charming and deſirable in this world. If you can indulge me in this darling theme, if you can point out any new plans by which my ſchemes may be ſucceſsful, write to me without delay; but if thou canſt only repeat truths which, though they may be truths, only fill me with diſguſt, (for conviction without reſolution is a tormenting fiend,) keep thy good counſel for thine own uſe, and leave to chance, and her bleſt propitious favor,

Thy friend,

FITZARNOLD.

LETTER VIII.

Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.

Arkley Caſtle, Sept. 4, 17—.

MY DEAR ELINOR,

YOUR intention is, I doubt not, very good, in ſending me a letter which, except its aſſuring me of your health, could not poſſibly afford me any comfort. You rally me unmercifully on my low ſpirits and my ſuperſtitious ſentiments, but you do not ſooth me, and you know not how much I ſtand in need of that conſolation. Indeed, my friend, were you a little to humour my failings, it might have a better effect. There are moments when my oppreſt mind flies for relief to ſome kind pitying heart, congenial with its own, and in ſeeking for ſuch an aſylum, I have, I fear, diſcovered, in ſome degree, the great ſecret of my ſoul to another

another beſides my Elinor. It was a moment of weakneſs which nothing but the fullneſs of my heart could excuſe. I have every reaſon to hope that the breaſt in which I have dared to repoſe it, is replete with honour.

Not to keep you in ſuſpenſe, I muſt begin by introducing a family who are my neareſt neighbours. They are the Lovefields of Baintree Park. He is a plain country ſquire, devoted to the ſports of the field, and not a very brilliant companion. His wife is one of thoſe notable dames who, having full power in her own department, and indeed uſurping authority far beyond its extent, takes upon her not only to regulate the economy of her own houſehold, but would be buſy in the arrangement of all her neighbours. She appears to me vulgar, impertinent, and underbred. She has three daughters—the eldeſt a very fine woman; and one ſon a child. The girls have been well educated, but from the conſtant example before their eyes, they

have imbibed ſome of her ideas, and have, beſides, a great deal of conceit and affectation. Upon the whole, they all ſeem favorites with Mr. St. Edward. He is himſelf a great ſportſman, and the horſes and hounds have their full ſhare in the converſations he holds with Mr. Lovefield. Do you think I have given you as yet any character to whom I could confide a ſecret; no, none of this group I have yet named: but there is one who at preſent forms a part of their family, and Heaven knows how he came to be a viſitor to ſuch people, or for what reaſon he prolongs his ſtay. It is Lord Fitzarnold. His manners are very pleaſing, and he ſeems to poſſeſs an underſtanding far ſuperior to any to which I have been lately uſed. He is certainly a man of the world, and as ſuch, may adopt ſentiments very different from his heart. But I know not how it is, his manners appear to be ſo regulated by decorum, and at the ſame time he ſhews ſuch an intereſt and ſuch a ſenſibility in all he expreſſes, that he imper-

imperceptibly gains upon the underſtanding, while his generous and liberal opinions lead you to unreſerve, and diveſt the mind of all ſuſpicion. Thus it was with me; and although I think well of Lord Fitzarnold, yet I did not mean to entruſt him with the deareſt ſecret of my heart: you may believe me, my Elinor, I did not. No,—let all its weakneſs be confined to the narrow circle which has hitherto contained it.

The ſubject of war happening to be introduced between us, he lamented in terms ſo pathetic the loſs of a near relation in the Weſt-Indies, as at once awakened my attention, and led me to aſk particulars. I fear my looks and manner betrayed an emotion the more apparent by endeavouring to conceal it. He looked at me as if he would penetrate my heart, while he expatiated upon the virtues of this beloved friend. "Yes," he continued, "he was in a few weeks to have returned, "and been bleſt by the hand of a woman,

"lovely almoſt as Mrs. St. Edward." I attended not to the compliment, but eagerly aſked how ſhe bore the loſs, and if ſhe was yet unmarried. "Yet, and ever "will remain ſo, my deareſt madam," he replied; "for can you ſuppoſe that vows "faithful as their's, approved on earth, "and regiſtered in Heaven, could ever be "transferred to others, even though one of "them were no more." This ſentence, uttered with energy and warmth, was too much for my weak ſpirits. I felt my heart palpitate; I trembled from head to foot; and ſome inarticulate ſentence involuntarily burſt from my lips. I cannot ſay what it was, but I thought his looks ſeemed to expreſs pity mixed with aſtoniſhment at what I had ſo inadvertently declared. In a moment I ſaw the danger as well as the folly into which I had been betrayed, and collecting all my reſolution, I recovered myſelf, and I think came off pretty well. I ſaid, "I have a very dear friend, whoſe "huſband is expoſed to the dangers of the "climate

" climate we have been ſpeaking of, and I " am ſo intereſted in whatever concerns " her, that I cannot hear of its dangers " without ſhewing an agitation, as if it " were a huſband of my own." I know not if he gave me credit for the truth of this, yet I cannot help fancying that he has ever ſince viewed me with pity: but whenever he has again led to that converſation, I have immediately changed it; for never more will I truſt myſelf with a ſubject in which I have ſo little command of my feelings.

Lord Fitzarnold ſeems, by an eaſy politeneſs, and a redundancy of goodnature, to accommodate himſelf to all our humours. As to the Loveſields, it is impoſſible he can like them; yet they all ſpeak of him in the higheſt terms. Mr. St. Edward too, ſeems pleaſed with his company; and, to ſpeak truth, his ſenſible obſervations, ſometimes ſeaſoned with the moſt poignant wit, have beguiled, if not enlivened, ſome hours which would otherwiſe have hung heavily

with

with your poor friend; for, my Elinor, to diſcloſe a ſecret which will I know be as ſafe in your breaſt as in my own, Mr. St. Edward has but little converſation. I have tried on various ſubjects to engage his attention, but none ſeem to fix him for a moment. He is what the world calls good-humoured, that is, he always appears gay and pleaſed, yet is ever looking forward for a pleaſure which never ſeems to arrive. The amuſements of the field ſeem to engroſs much of his attention; and I believe it is a common obſervation, that where horſes and dogs are in very high eſtimation, the more rational pleaſures of ſociety are leſs valued. When we are to dine at Baintree Park, or that family to dine with us, he anticipates the pleaſure of it with as much joy as others would expreſs on occaſions of much higher delight, and has once or twice wondered that I was not equally elated with the idea; yet, when the day has arrived, any common obſerver would ſuppoſe that I was the happieſt

pieſt perſon of the two; for when the enjoyment is actually in his poſſeſſion, it ſeems to have loſt its charms, and he is then expatiating on the pleaſures of ſome future day. This may be a happy ſort of diſpoſition to be always looking forward to felicity; it is ſurely better than to be looking back upon joys that muſt be thought of no more,—ah! never, never to return. I envy this happy propenſity more than I can expreſs. O that I could obliterate all the paſt, and only look forward to the joys which may be to come; yet I fear, thoſe reſerved for your Julia lie in a very narrow ſpace.—You remind me of our juvenile days, when we conſulted the old woman's aſtrological abilities, but you do not add how truly ſhe prophecied my deſtiny. Did ſhe not repeatedly tell me I ſhould not be married to the man of my heart? that I ſhould be miſerable, and he would not be happy? Few of thoſe people tell you ſuch unwelcome truths, but you muſt well remember ſhe did, although at that time I did not

believe her:—no, not a twelvemonth ſince would a far ſuperior power have perſuaded me that I ſhould now be Mrs. St Edward; that I ſhould—Oh! but I will forbear: I grow giddy at retroſpection.—Elinor, you do not uſe me well. You write me a nonſenſical letter, and try to evade my queſtions, and amuſe me by a trifling ſtyle of writing unlike yourſelf, and as if I were a child. You do not name your huſband: ſurely, that is a ſubject about which you cannot even affect to be indifferent. You might at leaſt have told me whether or not you had heard from him. You are not to learn that we ſhould write to each other as more than common correſpondents, or that there is little occaſion to ranſack our brains for fine ſentiments, or witty ſarcaſms: you muſt remember you deſired me to write you every thought of my mind; a heart like mine finds great relief in ſo doing, and I have ſtrictly obeyed your injunction; but you have not fulfilled your part, and unleſs you do, expect to be

treated

treated with a reſerve unworthy of our friendſhip, and truly foreign to the heart of

Your affectionate

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

LETTER IX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Arkley Caſtle, Sept. 14, 17—.

I WILL not wait, my dear Elinor, for your anſwer to the laſt; I will ſuppoſe you have taken ſome time to conſider its contents, and, according to my deſire, improve your ſtyle, and lay aſide your reſerve. I am now alone: St. Edward is gone to London. You cannot think with what childiſh impatience he looked forward to his journey; but upon this diſpoſition I have before enlarged, and the ſubject had, I believe, better drop. I was invited to go with him, but as he went upon buſineſs, and the journey would have afforded me no pleaſure,

pleaſure, I thought it beſt to remain here. Would you could come to me, for I feel myſelf very ſad and forlorn in this great caſtle quite alone. My mind, oppreſt with ſorrows, is weakened almoſt into fear. I am not ſuperſtitious; and uſed to poſſeſs a degree of courage which ſome of our ſex think unfeminine; but now I ſeem to be leſs under the dominion of reaſon than formerly, although I cannot account for it.

I ſat laſt night in a ſmall dreſſing-room at the end of a long gallery. It is not very near my chamber, but I choſe it for the fine view it has of the moſt beautiful part of the grounds and the adjacent country. I have decorated the brown oak wainſcot with ſome of my paintings, ornamented with fanciful frames of my own making, which have a pretty effect, and I prefer it ſo to a more modern ſtyle.—There are many parts of this caſtle in which I have never been; and its antiquity and mode of building muſt render it ſuitable to the reſidence of airy inhabitants. I confeſs this idea

pleaſed

pleaſed and amuſed me when I firſt came, and I welcomed the notion of ſupernatural forms and noiſes with the pleaſure the novelty inſpired; but we think and talk of things at a diſtance with different ſenſations from thoſe we feel when we really engage in them.—I ſuppoſe it may be rats which infeſt the rooms, and, perhaps, they have bred for many generations in ſome of the uninhabited parts of this caſtle; but I was really terrified laſt night at the ſtrange and unaccountable noiſes I heard. To be ſure I have no faith in ghoſts and goblins, and yet I ſtarted from my chair ſeveral times, and was at laſt compelled, through abſolute fear, to ring my bell; and when Lucy attended me, ſhe diſcerned ſo much alarm impreſſed on my countenance, that ſhe ventured to ſpeak upon the ſubject of terrors occaſioned by ſupernatural appearances, without that fear of my diſpleaſure by which ſhe had been hitherto reſtrained; for, on my firſt coming, the ſervants had told her a thouſand frightful ſtories, the repetition

petition of which I had prohibited, being replete with folly and ſuperſtition, and gathering additions each time they were related, until they were increaſed to a maſs of the moſt incoherent nonſenſe you can ſuppoſe. It was now, however, that my courage and reſolution deſerted me, and I allowed her, unreproved, to tell a tale, the recital of which may, perhaps, divert you, although I confeſs it terrified me.

To keep you therefore no longer in ſuſpenſe, Lucy began by ſaying, (in a heſitating voice and a countenance ſtrongly impreſſed with terror,) "Law, mame! you "look frightened;—ſure you hav'n't ſeen "any thing! O dear me, mame, this "houſe is ſartainly haunted. I have heard "ſitch noiſes as none but ſpirits could "make; and as ſure as I ſtands here alive, the "t'other night, as I was a coming through "the gallery where all the pictures be, I "heard a noiſe, and as I turned my head, "(tho' I generally ſhuts my eyes if I comes

"that

" that way,) law! I thought I ſhould a
" died; for the great picture of the ould
" lady as fronts the door, and I always thinks
" looks at me, but now its eyes moved,
" and I ſaw them as plain, mame, as I now
" ſee your's move. Well—I runs ſcream-
" ing back again, and juſt as I got to the
" great ſtairs I met Mary houſemaid, and
" ſo ſhe ſeeing me ſo frighted, we took
" faſt hold of one another, and ſhut our
" eyes, and ſo we run down ſtairs; and
" when I told her what had made me ſo
" frightful, ſhe was not at all ſurpriſed, for
" ſhe ſaid ſhe had ſeen it more than once or
" twice; and when ſhe told it in the kitchen,
" Mr. Harding, maſter's gentleman, ſaid
" there was no occaſion to be afeard, for
" ſitch things did happen now a-days; and
" ſaid as how he had read a book called the
" Caſtle of Trantum, where pictures walked
" out of their frames, and ſighed; and I
" think he ſaid, ſometimes ſpoke! Lord
" bleſs us! it makes me ſhake now but to
" think on't. However, I have never ven-

" tured

" tured through the gallery ſince; but I be-
" lieve it is the ſame in every place in the
" houſe; for the dairy-maid, who is up ſome-
" times before 'tis light, ſays ſhe has ſeen
" lights and faces a looking through the win-
" dows in the lower buildings, and heard
" ſitch noiſes, as ſhe's ſure the ghoſts muſt
" be playing ſtrange gambols."

Lucy was going on, and indeed I know not where ſhe would have ſtopped, for the ſubject ſeemed to be inexhauſtible; but here I interrupted her. I told her ſhe was not to attend to all the idle ſtories ſhe heard; that as to the eyes moving, which ſhe knew were only painted on a piece of canvas, it was folly in the extreme to ſuppoſe it; and as to the book ſhe mentioned, neither herſelf or the man underſtood it. It was written by a very ingenious man, in order to diſplay the powers of fancy upon the ſubject of terror, but by no means intended to be conſidered as truth, and was called the Caſtle of Otranto. I reaſoned with her a long time upon the abſurdity of her

her fears, and uſed all my rhetoric to diſſuade her from her belief in ſupernatural appearances or noiſes. Unfortunately for my argument, juſt as I had pronounced that the latter was occaſioned by rats, a moſt uncommon noiſe aſſailed our ears, and, as if to diſprove my aſſertion, ſuch as was impoſſible to have been produced by a rat. We both ſtarted;—I endeavoured to collect my ideas ſo as to diveſt my countenance of fear, although I confeſs I knew not what to make of it. I hardly know how to deſcribe it, but it appeared like three ſharp ſtrokes of a ſtick or cane upon a door which opens upon the top of three ſteps leading to a colonnade. This was not all, for in a moment after I diſtinctly heard ſeveral chords of muſic, ſounding like thoſe produced from a guitar or mandoline. The ſounds then died away, and ſoon after entirely ceaſed. How am I to account for theſe things, my friend? Can you wonder at my ſurpriſe, not to ſay my fear? I kept Lucy with me for the remainder of the

the evening, and I uſed all my endeavours to diſſipate her fears, at the ſame time I ſtood greatly in need myſelf of ſome able reaſoner to diſpel my own.

Perhaps I have never told you that Mr. St. Edward retains ſome very old ſervants in the caſtle, conſiſting of a ſteward, a butler, and a female ſervant, who all lived with our grandfather, and are, from age and infirmities, paſt ſervice, but are allowed to remain here during their lives, and as a reward for their fidelity and attachment to the family in all its viciſſitudes. The ſteward is infirm, but ſenſible and clear; the butler very ſickly; and the female ſervant more alive and alert than either, notwithſtanding ſhe is the oldeſt of the three.

I frequently make a viſit to theſe good people, and I always find myſelf in better humour after hearing their praiſes of my anceſtors, their gratitude for the comforts they enjoy, and the abundant bleſſings they pray may be continued to the poſterity of the St. Edwards. To this ancient

circle

circle I made a viſit the next morning. They received me with their uſual reſpect and cordiality. The butler, whoſe name is Arthur Bennet, is a very fine old man, with his hair as white as ſilver. He always wears a green apron; and on very particular gala days, will ſtill ſtand at the ſideboard. Mr. Bond, the old ſteward, is too far advanced in age to make any ſuch diſtinctions, or beſtow much notice on anything.

Alice Grundy, the female, is a cheerful neat old woman, with a ſharp noſe, and a pair of eyes, which, I have no doubt, did execution in their youth. She wears her gown laced down her ſtomacher, and a mob cap tied under her chin, and as tight as a drum upon her head. Her faculties are ſo little impaired by time, that ſhe is ſtill of uſe, and ſpins and knits for the family. She will always reſign her wicker chair to me, and overwhelms me with compliments and praiſes.—After enquiring of the health of each, and obſerving on the weather, I alluded to old times, and

aſked Arthur Bennet, in a careleſs manner, if the caſtle had not been always famous for ſtrange and unaccountable noiſes. "Yes, good madam," he replied, "that "it has; but I never minded the nonſenſe "that was talked. I have lived in it "nine-and-forty years come next Michael-"mas, and, thank God, never ſee'd anything "uglier than myſelf. As to noiſes, 'tis "impoſſible that in ſuch a great rambling "place, but there muſt be noiſes. Why I "reckon there be rats as old as I am, or "nearly; and then the wind makes its "way in all the long paſſages and ſtair-"caſes enough to ſtartle a bold man. But "I hope, my dear lady, you have met "with nothing to fright or terrify you; "and I am ſorry you did not go to London "with his honour: ſuch a ſweet couple "ſhould never be parted. My old maſter "and miſtreſs never were divided for fifty "years, and only then by death. But "faſhions be changed ſince then, and they "ſay as nobody lives in that ſort of way

"now

" now a-days,—the more's the pity; for " when two people loves one another, they " ſhould always be together."

Perhaps I might have been more willing to ſubſcribe to Arthur's opinions than moſt modern ladies would have done, but no matter, the ſubject made me grave, and a ſilence enſued, which was broken by Alice, who aſked me, in a low voice, and an enquiring eye, if I had ſeen or heard any thing to alarm me. I replied, " No, nothing but " what had juſt been accounted for, as oc- " caſioned by the wind, the rats, or various " other cauſes, by no means worth inveſti- " gating; except," I added, " the ſound " of muſic, which, not knowing any perſon " in the caſtle practiſed beſides myſelf, I " could not ſo eaſily account for." " Mu- " ſic!" repeated Arthur and Alice, both in a breath, and with looks of unfeigned ſurpriſe, " that cannot be!" " Certainly," I ſaid, " it was, and heard not only by " myſelf, but likewiſe by my maid, who " was with me; that we diſtinctly heard

" ſeveral notes repeated upon the kind of " inſtrument before mentioned; that I had " made enquiry amongſt the ſervants, and " found that not one of them played upon " any inſtrument whatſoever." The old man and woman viewed each other with what I thought very ſignificant looks, but ſtill doubting what I had affirmed; and finding I could gain no information, I concluded my viſit with good wiſhes for their health.

This day's poſt brought me a letter from St. Edward. He does not talk of returning, on the contrary, he is going to Margate with a family of whom he ſpeaks in a ſtrain of rapture, which, from the pen of an adored huſband, might create no ſmall jealouſy. Why it has not that effect on me I will leave to your penetration to diſcover, and content myſelf, as a good wife ſhould, under ſuch unfortunate circumſtances. I have written you two long letters, and I think the leaſt you can do is to anſwer them without delay, as well to conſole me

in

in my widowed ſtate, as to comfort me with the aſſurance that I may rely on your friendſhip; and ever remain,

Truly yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

LETTER X.

Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. Clifford.

Ledcombe, Sept. 21, 17—.

MY DEAR MADAM,

EARNESTLY wiſhing that my next letter might convey to you good tidings of our friend, I have deferred, to a ſtrange length of time, anſwering your kind and explanatory epiſtle, and for which my thanks are moſt gratefully due. You expreſſed a wiſh to hear from me of Mrs. St. Edward, as from the friend to whom ſhe would be unreſerved, nor have I any reaſon to complain of her on this ſcore. I have

two of her letters now before me, written, I am ſure, from the heart. I have not yet anſwered either of them, for, indeed, I know not in what ſtyle to write. I rallied her on ſome of her ſentiments, which I endeavoured to ſet in a childiſh and ridiculous light; but that would not do,—ſhe felt offended; and to hurt her feelings would be cruelty in the extreme; yet ſhe ſtands greatly in need of advice.

I like not the predicament in which ſhe is now placed. St. Edward has been gone to London near three weeks; and now ſhe tells me he is going to Margate. She is left a prey not only to her own reflections, but her mind, enervated by ſorrow, is become ſubject to fears and ſuperſtition. You know the idle reports concerning Arkley Caſtle; my friend gives way to theſe chimeras, and liſtens to the tales of the ſervants. Can this be Julia St. Edward? methinks you aſk: Yes;—but this is not the worſt. I fear nothing in the ſhape of ſupernatural ideas;—Julia would in time be

be diverted at her own fears: but there is a hideous lord viſiting at Baintree Park, and the intimacy between the two families, gives him frequent opportunities of ſeeing Julia. I have enquired his character, and do not find it ſuch as will merit the favor of her acquaintance. He is artful and inſinuating; and ſhe has, in ſome of their converſations, inadvertently ſpoken on a ſubject too near her heart, to conceal its emotions. One of her letters informs me of this circumſtance, and that ſhe inſtantly ſaw the error into which ſhe had fallen. I am alarmed on this account; not that I have any fears of the rectitude of her conduct,—Julia St. Edward is purity itſelf; and would ſhudder at any idea inconſiſtent with honour and integrity. Yet a man of the world, like Lord Fitzarnold, deſigning and engaging, is by no means a proper acquaintance for beauty and innocence like her's.

I am enraged at her huſband for leaving her behind when he went to London, and

ſtill more for prolonging his ſtay, when no urgent cauſe, I am ſure, requires it. Of what ſtrange materials is the compoſition of ſome men formed. St. Edward was diſtractedly in love with Julia; his impatience for the marriage was beyond all bounds; but no ſooner is the rich jewel entirely his own, than he leaves her in order to purſue every empty folly that has novelty for its allurement; and what is worſe, he leaves her expoſed to the impertinence of an unprincipled libertine. O that it were in my power to go to her, that I might watch over and guard her innocence with a zeal equal to the love and regard I feel for her; but that is now impoſſible. But, my dear madam, could not you give her your protection? it would be an act of the higheſt charity, I had almoſt ſaid of piety. I know how truly ſhe reveres your opinions, and will abide by all the counſels of your heart. In the pleaſing hope that this wiſh of mine may meet your approbation, and ſuit your convenience, I will

conclude

conclude, with reſpects to your worthy uncle; and am,

Dear madam,

Your affectionate humble ſervant,

ELINOR SAFFOREY.

LETTER XI.

Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.

Crayborne, Sept. 27th, 17—.

DEAR MADAM,

AFTER thanking you moſt kindly for your letter, I am ſorry to ſay I cannot comply with your requeſt, reſpecting a viſit to Arkley Caſtle; not, believe me, dear madam, from any want of inclination, or that the neceſſity you point out does not ſtrike me as proper at leaſt, if not neceſſary. I love Mrs. St. Edward as if ſhe were my own child; I ſee the danger of her ſituation, and I would be happy to

oblige you; but there is a diſtance between the lady of Arkley Caſtle, and a dependant governeſs, which will not, by any means, allow of a viſit voluntarily offered. 'Tis true, ſhe aſked me to viſit her when ſhe went away; but you muſt be ſenſible that both our ſituations demand a more formal invitation. Yet, ſuch is my anxiety for her, and which your account has ſo greatly encreaſed, that I would have broken through theſe bonds of propriety, and dared the imputation of impertinence, had I not yeſterday heard that Mr. St. Edward is expected, and is to bring with him a great deal of company. How, then, can I be an intruder at ſuch a time? Company will engage and amuſe our dear friend; and I truſt that the rectitude of her own heart will claim that protection which is never withheld from the deſerving, and is ſo infinitely ſuperior to all we can offer.

I cannot endure the idea of Mrs. St. Edward entertaining fears like thoſe you mention: that a mind like her's ſhould be warped

warped by ſuperſtition is a ſad proof of our imperfection. I can only place it to the account of depreſſion of ſpirits, and a mind, not quite at eaſe, being left to the whimſical workings of diſordered fancy. The inſinuating nobleman might to any other be a dangerous object, but Julia has a heart replete with honour, firmneſs, and integrity: ſhe will in a moment recal and rectify the leaſt deviation from propriety. Her huſband will return; company will engage her attention; new ſcenes will amuſe her; and all will be well. Theſe are my hopes, my wiſhes, and my prayers: that they may not be diſappointed, is the ſincere deſire of,

Dear madam,
Your obliged and faithful humble
ſervant,
ANN CLIFFORD.

LETTER XII.

From Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Saffory.

Arkley Caſtle, Sept. 30, 17—.

SO you will not write, my dear Elinor; well, I cannot help it;—but you muſt bear the puniſhment of another letter from me; and as I have received no prohibition, I ſhall conclude from your ſilence, that you like the hiſtories of ghoſts, and fears occaſioned by them. I will, therefore, continue the ſupernatural ſtrain, but firſt let me give precedence to the living. Mr. St. Edward writes me from Margate, where he has been ſtaying with the family I mentioned in my laſt, that he has invited them to ſpend the remainder of the Autumn at Arkley Caſtle, and if nothing ſhould happen to prevent them, they will be here in about three weeks. The high encomiums he paſſes on theſe new acquaintances

is

is really diverting, and particularly the praiſes he beſtows on the young lady; but, that you may uſe your own judgment, I will encloſe it, becauſe it really is an original.—Would to Heaven he had ſeen this enchanting creature ſome months back!

But to return to my firſt ſubject.—I am ſo habituated to noiſes and alarms, that I am almoſt grown callous to them, at leaſt I am fearleſs; and have been prying into all the old rooms in the caſtle, ſome of which are, indeed, curious from their antiquity. I have traverſed over every one of them, and I met with nothing that could frighten me in any. 'Tis true, it was in the day-time, when, I believe, ghoſts never appear. About five o'clock in the afternoon of the ſame day, I ſtrolled into the gallery of famous mention; and whether it was from what Lucy had related of my grandmother's picture, or that the painter has given the eyes an uncommon expreſſion, I know not, but I was myſelf

myſelf ſo firmly perſuaded that they moved, that nothing but touching them could convince me to the contrary. I therefore took a high ſtool, which was in the room, and (give me credit for my courage,) ſtood upon it, and touched the face with my hand; nothing leſs would have convinced me; and canvas to be ſure it was, although I could juſt before have confidently affirmed that it was alive. One of the noiſes which I have frequently heard, but cannot deſcribe, made me jump from the ſtool, and haſtily leave the gallery. My mind was unſettled; I felt unuſually depreſſed; and I went into a ſmall room below ſtairs, unworthy the name of a ſtudy, in which are ſome books placed upon ſhelves. I took down one after the other, without deſign or choice; and in an old volume of plays was a ſhort copy of verſes, which ſtruck my fancy as in ſome degree applicable to my own ſituation; at leaſt they were ſo conſonant to my feelings, that I could not but admire them. The paper was perfectly clean, and

the

the writing appeared freſh. I put them in my pocket, and have tranſcribed them for your peruſal.

Whilſt I dwell on the form which enraptures my mind,
I forget that my wiſhes muſt ſtill be confin'd;
That the comfort, the hope, and delight of my ſoul,
Muſt be govern'd by laws, and ſubmit to controul.
Oh, let not the ſigh of a heart ſo ſincere
Be ſuppreſt by ſuſpicion, or ſtifled by fear:
Let the mind that's congenial be lib'ral and free,
Unfetter'd by forms of ill-omen'd decree;
So ſhall regiſter'd vows of reciprocal love,
Be approv'd upon earth, and be bleſt from above.

What think you of the lines? I am no judge of poetry myſelf, but they convey ſentiments congenial to my mind; and after I had read them, I indulged a train of ideas, not, indeed, calculated to mitigate my ſorrows, nor ſuch as I often allow, but yet ſuch as can never, I fear, be obliterated; never, while buſy memory plays about my heart.

Yeſterday morning, Lord Fitzarnold called. He had been to Litchfield races, with the family at Baintree Park. He gave

gave me a ſhort account of them, but ſaid, he was heartily tired before the completion of the week; that he deteſted ſuch meetings; and gave a moſt ludicrous recital of ſome of their quarrels about precedence, and other matters equally trifling.

He is certainly a man of a ſuperior underſtanding to thoſe with whom he generally aſſociates, and it is for this reaſon that I am at a loſs to account for his paſſing ſo much of his time with the Lovefields. The ſubject of literature happened to be introduced, when he ſpoke with more taſte and knowledge on the ſubject than any perſon I have converſed with ſince I came here. I ſhewed him the verſes I found, and aſked his opinion of them. He read them careleſsly, and ſaid, all the merit they had was their being honoured by my approbation; and aſked me if I was fond of poetry.—Pray, Elinor, do you ever mean to write to me again? I promiſe you I ſhall write no more till you do. Indeed, when this family arrives, of whom

whom Mr. St. Edward ſpeaks in ſo much rapture, I ſhall have no time, and, I may add, no inclination, unleſs you write to me in return. Adieu!

Ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

LETTER XIII.

Mr. St. Edward to Mrs. St. Edward.

Margate, Sept. 25, 17—.

MY DEAR JULIA,

I HOPE you are well. I have been at this place near three weeks, and found it very pleaſant, though the weather has been rather warm for the time of year; but it is now getting cold, ſo cloſe to the ſea, and I begin to be tired of it. I have engaged Mr. and Mrs. Carroſet, and their lovely daughter, to return with me to Arkley. They are very agreeable people, and I am

ſure

ſure you will like the young lady: ſhe is a charming handſome girl, has been educated in France, and is highly accompliſhed. She will be a delightful companion for you; and I have promiſed for you, that you will do every thing in your power to make their viſit pleaſant to them.

I would have Robert kill a buck; the fatteſt he can find. I hope our neighbour Lovefield will ſupply us with more game than the keeper generally furniſhes. Remember you give orders to have the great pond in the cloſe dragged; but that need not be done till the morning of the day we arrive. I expect to have a profuſion of fruit. Mr. Carroſet is a judge of eating; and I would have every thing appear to the beſt advantage. Miſs Carroſet will frequently give you a drive in the phaeton; ſhe can drive four in hand:—indeed, there is nothing in which ſhe does not excel, and you will be very happy in her company. I have every reaſon to think that my father is no more. After all the enquiry I have

have made, I can hear no intelligence concerning him, nor diſcover whereabouts he is concealed, if he is, indeed, living, and in retirement. Give my compliments to all friends, and believe me,

Dear Julia,

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM ST. EDWARD.

P. S. You will order the beſt apartments to be ready for the family I ſhall bring with me. I believe we ſhall be at Arkley by Tueſday, but this is uncertain, and I ſhall write again.

LETTER XIV.

Miſs Carroſet to Miſs Baynard.

I PROMISED you a long letter, my dear Maria; I have ſubjects ſufficient for one, and characters enough to delineate, but I have not ſo much time as I wiſh. That dear creature, St. Edward, is continually planning ſchemes for my amuſement, and allows me no time to myſelf.—You can form no idea of the place we are at, nor can I give you a very juſt one of it. It is an immenſe large old caſtle, ſtanding quite by itſelf, and is ſituated near the moorlands of Staffordſhire. I cannot think how people could ever be ſo abſurd as to build ſuch a great rambling houſe in ſo forlorn a place. My father is perſuading St. Edward to modernize it, but there are ſome queer people in the neighbourhood, who think it would

would be as bad as ſacrilege to remove a pillar, or make the leaſt alteration.

Mrs. St. Edward too, in a prim drawling voice, cries out againſt it, and ſays its beauty and its grandeur is derived from the antiquity of its appearance, and on no account ſhould be changed. I'll tell you what Maria, this Mrs. St. Edward is a hateful being; I will not ſay what I would not do to vex and torment ſuch a piece of ſtarched prudery. She is ſaid to be very handſome, and the men all ſeem to think her ſo; but for my own part, I hate ſuch a countenance: ſhe has a fine complexion to be ſure, but that you know is not very uncommon; her eyes too are well enough; but ſhe has ſuch a provoking uniformity in her manner: I don't know that I have expreſſed it right neither, I don't know what it is. It is not nonchalance, it is not want of animation, but it is a kind of ſerious eaſe, bordering upon contempt, and yet perfectly civil. I dare ſay you may have met with ſuch a character, though it is not, I

believe

believe, a very common one. Nothing ſeems to put her out of her way; not even the conſtant ſmiles and ſignificant looks I every moment convey to her huſband appear to have the leaſt effect upon her. I ſuppoſe ſhe has no great love for him; and yet, if I throw out rather a free expreſſion, ſhe darts ſuch a look at me as I can ſcarcely encounter, for you muſt know ſhe affects to be delicacy itſelf.

I ride, I walk, I fiſh, I romp, with St. Edward, yet this does not ſeem in the leaſt to diſturb her. If it was not for him I aſſure her I ſhould not be here; but he is a handſome fellow, Maria, and between ourſelves, he has no averſion to your friend:—this I knew before I came here, or nothing ſhould have dragged me to ſuch a place, which looks exactly like the picture of Noah's ark. In the park, indeed, there are ſome pleaſant walks; and at the diſtance of about two miles, a family of the name of Lovefield, who have at preſent a lord for their viſitor, and give themſelves airs of conſequence on this account.

count. I can form but little judgment of their merits, having only ſeen them one morning when St. Edward drove me there in his phaeton, or rather, I drove him; for he always ſubmits the reins to my hands, whilſt he admires my dexterity in managing the horſes, praiſes my complexion, and twiſts my ringlets round his fingers with admiration of my beautiful treſſes, which you know are the true golden locks.

I think, Maria, this is a better way of ſpending the Autumn, than ſtaying at a ſtupid watering place, where the men are all tired of looking at one; and where, indeed, there are ſuch flocks of women, that they are quite a nuiſance; and day after day paſſes, and you ſee nothing but petticoats. I confeſs I like the preſent way of paſſing my time infinitely better, and as yet I have not found it heavy. If I could chuſe, I would be here alone;—don't miſtake me, my dear—not by myſelf for the whole world; but I mean without any of my own precious family. My mother,

poor

poor woman! affects to be what nature never deſigned her for, a fine lady. She is continually talking of nerves, delicacy, and fine feelings, but ſadly miſapplies the occaſions on which they ſhould be diſplayed: and as to my father, he abſolutely diſguſts me with his love of good things. He talks of his dinner whilſt he is eating his breakfaſt; and when the fiſh and the veniſon, &c. &c. are placed upon the table, his eyes ſeem to devour every diſh with the ſame greedineſs, which he afterwards diſplays in the actual filling his ſtomach with them.

It is, ſurely, a filthy thing to eat in ſuch a manner, and to make it the great buſineſs of life. He is likewiſe very vulgar in all his ideas;—and theſe are the drawbacks to my preſent happineſs: for otherwiſe, I have no great reaſon to complain. I pretty nearly follow my own inclinations; and you know, my education has given me a thouſand advantages. There is but one misfortune annexed to it, which is, the

infe-

inferiority of the reſt of my family; for you know, I cannot ſhake them off as I could a very diſagreeable awkward acquaintance. There is that brother of mine; Heaven forbid he ſhould come here!—that is a circumſtance that would abſolutely quite overpower me;—and yet I fear nothing is more likely than his taking it into his head to, what he calls, *daſh*, and make an excurſion to this place; and fancy he ſhould be admired; and, by expoſing his folly, ſuppoſe himſelf very much the thing; boaſting of his riches, and ſo on; and appealing to me for the truth of what he ſays, to confirm all his vulgar exploits. He calls me *Charlee!* at every word; and is, in every reſpect, tireſome. O the wretch!—defend me from his company! I hope to God he will not come here: we do tolerably well as it is. The homely phraſes of my father are but little regarded; and whenever my mother is inclined to give herſelf airs, I take care to check her ſufficiently either by words or

looks, which, by the aſcendancy I have gained, ſhe appears pretty well to underſtand.—I am eaſy enough on theſe points here; for as to Mrs. St. Edward, I deteſt her, and care not what ſhe thinks; and for St. Edward himſelf, (don't mention it again, my dear,) he is—no conjuror; only deviliſh handſome, and has enough ſenſe to be captivated with a certain friend of your's, who gives him credit for his taſte, and for whom I have ſome eſteem; and you muſt allow it is a proof that he is not quite deficient in underſtanding.

I had written thus far, when I was ſummoned to the drawing-room, in order to entertain and be entertained by the family I have before mentioned, viz. the Lovefields, except the father, who, it ſeems, was hunting or racing, having little or no taſte for anything elſe. The mother is a large overgrown creature, with cheeks that look as if they had been made red with ſaltpetre; two ſtaring goggle eyes; and a mouth ſufficiently wide to ſwallow a calf:

ſhe

ſhe talks loud enough to deafen one; and is full of her own importance. The eldeſt girl is tolerably handſome, and ſeems to have acquired a confident ſtare, and a bold carriage, which I ſhould not have expected to have been the produce of a confined and country education. Perhaps Lord Fitzarnold (who has been their viſitor for ſome time, and who accompanied them,) has taken ſome pains to modernize her manners. She appeared to be endeavouring to attract his notice by every allurement ſhe could throw out. The two other girls ſeemed of leſs conſequence in their own opinion, and conſequently in that of others.

Mrs. St. Edward received them with that eaſe and coolneſs of character which I have before deſcribed, and for which I could tear out her eyes: yes, Maria, it is the moſt provoking way you can conceive; I ſay provoking, becauſe I fear it is not without its charms; at leaſt there are people who admire ſuch deteſtable manners.

Give me no credit for my penetration, if that odious lord does not view her with partial eyes. He ſeems to poſſeſs more knowledge of the world, and *certain ideas*, than any body I have yet ſeen; nor do I half like him. He watches every one's countenance, and looks as if he could read all that paſſes in the heart; and is the more to be feared, as it is concealed under very elegant manners and apparent good ſenſe. I proteſt I felt almoſt afraid of him when he aſked me, with a ſort of ironical ſmile, when I had exhibited my equeſtrian powers, and given Mr. St. Edward an airing; and before I could collect myſelf ſufficiently to anſwer him, he turned to Mrs. St. Edward, and with a ſignificant ſneer, ſaid, "I think you never attempt "the management of the reins." "No," ſhe replied; "it would require more ſkill "and more courage than I can boaſt of." O the hateful puſs! if I can detect anything between her and his lordſhip, it ſhall not be loſt, nor want embelliſhments. I will

will amuſe St. Edward with ſuch a ſtory as ſhall afford me ample vengeance upon the haughty dame.

It ſeems theſe people came to invite us to Baintree Park, the name of their place; but the day is not yet fixed. St. Edward addreſſed me with an impatience equally improper with the ill-timed compliment, to know which day would be moſt agreeable to me. For the firſt time, I believe, I gave him a look of contempt, and he appeared frightened and embarraſſed; but I could not help it, for Lord Fitzarnold's eyes were rivetted upon us, and there was no bearing their ſcrutiny. However, I commanded my voice, and ſaid, in a ſoft accent, there were others to be conſulted before me, and that I ſhould be perfectly ſatisfied with the determination of the reſt of the company.

He whiſpered that I was an angel, which, I hope, was heard by no one but myſelf. I know not how it was decided; I only heard Mrs. St. Edward drawling

out, that ſhe ſhould be happy to contribute to the amuſement of her friends; and they ſoon after took their leave. She then addreſſed me, by aſking what was my opinion of the party who had juſt left us. I told her, with an affected unconcern, that I had attended very little to them. They might be very good ſort of people for anything I knew, but I muſt be better acquainted with them before I could venture an opinion. As to Lord Fitzarnold, it required but little judgment to give a decided one upon him.

"Indeed!" ſhe replied; "Why, what "is your idea of him?"

"A decided one," ſaid I; "that he is "an artful, licentious man of the world; "perhaps a pleaſant acquaintance, but a "dangerous friend."

"Then you were acquainted with him "before," ſhe replied, with more quickneſs and ſpirit than I had ever ſeen her exert.

"No

"No madam," ſaid I, "I have no more "knowledge of him than every woman "muſt have who has ſeen anything of the "world; and I think I have ſeen enough "of that, to ſpeak decidedly of Lord Fitz-"arnold."

She muſed a moment, then lifted up her naſty eyes, and dropped the ſubject. I never ſaw any woman whoſe manners excited ſo much hatred; I fear I ſhall affront her.

To-morrow is Sunday, and it ſeems we are all to go to church. St. Edward appeared to make an apology for the cuſtom, by ſaying, it was the faſhion of the houſe. Mrs. St. Edward ſaid ſhe never miſſed going. My mother affected to be pious, and ſaid her nervous head-achs had kept her away longer than ſhe wiſhed, and ſhe ſhould be very happy to have an opportunity of joining in the public worſhip. I was really aſhamed of her cant. My father looked grave, and ſaid nothing; and I aſked, with a look full of meaning,

if Lord Fitzarnold attended divine ſervice.

"Yes," ſaid Mrs. St. Edward, "I have "ſeen his lordſhip there, and have likewiſe "obſerved that he behaved very properly."

"O, no doubt," I replied; "he knows "when and where to pay his adorations." I thought her prim countenance looked a little diſconcerted at this ſpeech, which was meant indeed more for St. Edward than for her; but he, I believe, did not even hear it, for he ſat picking his teeth with the utmoſt ſang froid, and ſeemed quite unacquainted with the converſation that was going on.

I ſhall be heartily glad when to-morrow is over. I ſuppoſe I muſt not take my netting to church; it would diſturb the piety of the whole congregation; and yet I am ſure I ſhall fall aſleep for want of amuſement, which will be as bad; and I ſuppoſe St. Edward muſt not make love at church. I wiſh in the mean time I had a letter from you; I could read that while

while I was pretending to ſay my prayers. Don't fail to write to me by the Sunday following. Tell me every thing you can think of to entertain me; and believe me

Ever yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

Arkley Caſtle,
Oct. 1, 17—.

Monday, October 3.

I open my letter again my dear Maria, to tell you of the ſtrangeſt thing, and the moſt frightful!—Oh I am terrified to death; I have not half recovered; I never ſhall forget it. I'm ſure the houſe is haunted, and I have ſeen a ghoſt. I muſt never be left alone a moment again whilſt I ſtay at this deteſtable old place; yet, would you believe it, Maria, I am, only laughed at. But nothing ſhall perſuade me it was a real woman; no, it had all the appearance of a ghoſt; for though I never before ſaw one, I had an idea of its gliding along and its horrible looks. Maria, do you

think there is any harm in playing at cards on a Sunday, eſpecially after one had been at church? but that was not all, neither. However, I am not at confeſſion, nor obliged to tell you more than I chooſe, notwithſtanding I have been ſo alarmed. Well, but to keep you no longer in ſuſpenſe—Yeſterday was a terrible ſtupid day, you know. To be ſure, I had a little walk in the park before dinner, with St. Edward, and he made love prettily enough. I aſked him how we were to paſs the evening, and deſcribed to him in glowing colours the delightful amuſements we uſed to have in Paris on that day. He is always pleaſed with novelty, and expreſſed a wiſh, that we could both be conveyed there by ſome magic power, in order to enjoy thoſe felicities, in the praiſes of which I had been ſo laviſh. However, as that could not be, we ſuggeſted a plan of meeting in the evening in an unfrequented part of the caſtle, where we might have a game at picquet, and enjoy

joy a little private converſation, without giving offence to the more pious part of the family.

This being arranged, and the evening advanced, we ſlipped away from the reſt, which was no very difficult buſineſs; for Mrs. St. Edward was gone to read a ſermon, or ſome ſuch frumpiſh thing, to her maids; and my father and mother were both faſt aſleep. St. Edward led me up a narrow ſtaircaſe, and then through a long paſſage, at the end of which was a nice little ſnug room, juſt fit for our purpoſe. We laughed at the oddity of our ſituation; and I never ſaw St. Edward more gay. We played at picquet for kiſſes: the time inſenſibly ſtole away, and darkneſs overtook us before we expected it. St. Edward ſaid he would go for a light, for we did not chooſe that the ſervants ſhould know we were there alone. Accordingly he left me, and was no ſooner gone, than a door (oppoſite to that by which we had entered, and which I had not obſerved,) ſlowly opened,

and the figure of a woman, dreſſed in mourning, tall and pale, entered the room. She fixed her hideous glaring eyes on me, and ſeemed to be advancing to where I ſat. I gave a dreadful ſcream, and ran as faſt as my fears would allow out of the room by the door I had entered; and along the paſſage, ſcreaming all the way, regardleſs of what opinions might be formed from being found in ſuch a place. I know not whether the ſpectre followed me, for I never once dared turn my head; but the firſt objects my eyes encountered were Mr. and Mrs. St. Edward, with two of the ſervants. They plainly ſaw that I was terrified, and Mrs. St. Edward was endeavouring to ſoothe me by very kind and compaſſionate expreſſions, but that blockhead St. Edward, who is thrown off his guard by every little accident, and has no more command of himſelf than a child, puſhed her aſide, and gave even the ſervants an advantage over us, by ſaying, "What "is the matter, my dear angel? Has any-

"thing

" thing alarmed you? What a curſed fool " I was to leave you alone in that place!"

Never ſhall I forget the looks of Mrs. St. Edward: ſhe was turning from me with all that contempt which is aſſumed by boaſted virtue, when I inſtantly caught her hand, and with more humility and reſpect than I had ever before ſhewn her, I thanked her for her polite attention to me, and uttered ſomething like an apology for having alarmed her. I added it was Mr. St. Edward alone that was to blame, for carrying me up at that time in the evening, to look at an old part of the caſtle, which we could not ſee for the darkneſs; and that while he was gone to fetch a light, I had been extremely terrified by the appearance of a woman dreſſed in black, with a long pale face, and large eyes. St. Edward was by this time a little collected, and corroborated my ſtory, except ſeeing the phantom, which, he aſſured me, was nothing but the effect of my fears at being left in the dark.

I ſtill

I ſtill perſiſted in what I had at firſt declared, and Mrs. St. Edward, with a very ſtiff air, ſaid, it was poſſible; for that three very old and reſpectable ſervants, who were paſt ſervice, reſided near that part of the caſtle; that one of them was a female, though ſhe did not at all reſemble the figure I had repreſented; but for this ſhe accounted by my fears, which of courſe magnified her figure, and otherwiſe altered her appearance. I felt myſelf in an awkward ſituation, and wiſhed nothing farther to be ſaid; for I could not encounter her looks with the ſame degree of confidence I had before aſſumed. I ſaid my fright had made me unfit for company; I pleaded a head-ach; and ordering my maid to attend me, I retired to my chamber. I have ſeen none of them this morning.

I hate to be expoſed in ſo fooliſh a way. What the devil do people keep a parcel of antiquated creatures about a houſe, frightful enough in itſelf without ſuch appendages, and who render it ſtill more terrible. Did you

you ever hear of ſervants being kept becauſe they were old and good for nothing? I ſuppoſe this is a whim of Mrs. St. Edward's; and I dare ſay ſhe takes great merit to herſelf in allowing theſe odious creatures to ſtalk about the caſtle, to add to the antiquity of her family, and to terrify her viſitors by their hideous appearance. Well—defend me from ſuch fancies! And yet I cannot be perſuaded that the thing I ſaw was an inhabitant of this world, nor had ſhe in the leaſt the air of a ſervant. I hope I ſhall never ſee it again. This adventure has broken in upon my arrangements; I do not like it; I am at preſent in a very ill humour; but I wiſh to ſend off my letter, and ſo muſt once more bid you adieu.

LETTER XV.

Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.

I HAVE had no time, my dear Elinor, to anſwer your letter * before, and I fear leaſt you ſhould think I reſent your chidings;—indeed I do not; for I wiſhed to thank you for them, and not only to thank, but aſſure you that they were not thrown away upon me. I have obſerved an uniform and ſtrict mode of behaviour towards Lord Fitzarnold, and have been rigidly reſerved upon every ſubject that could poſſibly throw me off my guard; but the character of that gentleman you have miſtaken; and I am well aſſured, he never thought of your friend in any other light than as an acquaintance. I am truly glad, my dear, that you were miſtaken; I wiſh

* This letter from Mrs. Safforey does not appear.

you

you had been as much ſo in another character on whom you have ſpoken even more decidedly. Alas, my Elinor! I am a wretched being! Would you believe it? I am jealous!—at leaſt I think it muſt be jealouſy; and yet I fear I never loved St. Edward ſufficiently to feel that ſenſation, which, I have heard, is a torment the moſt acute. Indeed, I can well believe it; for had I experienced the ſame injury and neglect from an object more dear, and placed in the ſame ſituation, I think the pangs muſt have been too keen for me to have ſupported. May I not, then, derive at leaſt that comfort from my adverſe fate? Ah no! Henry Delafore would never have behaved as St. Edward has done! You ſee I am grown bold, and write a name at length which I once conſidered as prohibited, and never allowed myſelf even to murmur it in a whiſper; ſo true is that excellent proverb, *Evil communications corrupt good manners*. But I am keeping you in ſuſpenſe with my obſervations, and you will

will again call me childiſh, and tell me I write like a ſilly girl; I will, therefore, endeavour to proceed with more order and method.

You muſt remember the family I told you I expected, and the curious letter St. Edward ſent to announce their intended viſit:—I confeſs it diverted me; ſo did the family when they came. I ſoon obſerved that St. Edward was wonderfully delighted with the young lady, who, to do her juſtice, is very handſome; but I was perfectly eaſy on this head, for I knew that he was always governed by the whim of the moment, and that his partialities were of no long duration. In this caſe, however, I have been miſtaken; and I have every reaſon to believe, that St. Edward loves Miſs Carroſet with a firm and ſteady attachment; and in proportion as he loves her, ſo muſt he hate me; for I hope we are direct oppoſites. His attentions to her, though they were carried to exceſs, never had the ſmalleſt effect upon me, except

except now and then to cauſe a ſmile at the extravagance of his admiration, which, I conſidered, would cool and wear off with the ſame rapidity it had began. He could neither be ſaid to behave well or ill to me; he ſeemed not to know that I exiſted; and was wholly abſorbed in the contemplation of one object; it was, therefore, more incumbent on me to fulfil the duties of my province, and to ſupport the character of his wife by my attention to the reſt of the company. I declare my ſpirits are exhauſted by preſſing civilities on the old people; and am condemned for hours to hear the father's vulgariſms, and the no leſs tireſome complaints of the mother, who will perſiſt in deſcanting upon the ſyſtem of her nerves, and, with a tedious monotony, relate hiſtories which can be intereſting to no one creature.

To all this I ſubmit, and even bear it with patience, knowing that it will not always laſt; and although my proſpects are not enriched by much diverſity, I yet look

look forward to the time when there will be an end of this viſit; when St. Edward will again be more collected; and again I may be conſidered a novelty, and become his favourite. With theſe hopes I ſhut my eyes to the tender looks he gives Miſs Carroſet, as I do my ears to the gallantry of his expreſſions. The airs of coquettry, and the allurements ſhe is conſtantly practiſing, likewiſe paſs unregarded; nor do I ever ſhew a look of reproach, except when her alluſions border upon indelicacy, then, indeed, I expreſs ſomething like reproof; for that is a kind of converſation I deteſt.

This mode of behaviour has been purſued for a length of time:—her father will ſometimes make a few coarſe and ill-timed remarks upon it; but theſe are never regarded;—and her mother is too much engroſſed with her nerves, to attend properly to the conduct of her daughter. However, as we have lived pretty much at home, and ſeldom ſee any viſitors, except the family from Baintree Park, in whoſe preſence the young

young lady ſeems more upon her guard, the abſurdity of their indiſcretions might have been confined within our own circle, had they ſet any bounds to their folly.

Laſt Sunday, a day which ſhould have been marked by better conduct, they choſe to retire, when the evening was far advanced, to an unfrequented part of the caſtle, where they remained till it was too dark for them to find their way back without a light. St. Edward therefore left her for the purpoſe of procuring one, when this fair-one, who had boaſted of ſuch Amazonian courage! who derided religion as a ſuperſtitious form! and ridiculed the timidity natural to the ſex! was by ſome ſtrange occurrence, thrown into a dreadful alarm. She ſcreamed with the terror of real affright, and her looks expreſſed ſo much agitation and diſmay, that I could not help ſhewing my compaſſion and pity, by endeavouring to ſoothe and recover her; what then was my aſtoniſhment (I had almoſt added my contempt), when

when I was rudely puſhed aſide by St. Edward! Yes, Elinor, roughly puſhed away before all the ſervants, who were drawn together by her ſcreams, and were witneſſes of the frantic way in which he addreſſed her; and whilſt he held her in his arms, fondly kiſſing her forehead and her eyes, ſpeaking to her by the kindeſt and the moſt endearing epithets, and curſing himſelf for having left her to the poſſible chance of alarm. During this ſcene I ſtood motionleſs; every eye was turned from them to myſelf alternately; pity, and contempt by turns agitated me; and I flew to my chamber, where a violent burſt of tears in ſome degree relieved me. I believe pride had the greateſt ſhare in my affliction, for as to any other paſſion—Oh Elinor, my pen ſhall never deſcribe the feelings of my heart upon this occaſion! To be thus treated before the ſervants, and to hear their comments, which I could neither avoid nor reprove; their indignation getting the better of all reſpect;—one wiſhing

wiſhing ſhe had been frightened to death; another declaring it was no wonder the devil ſhould come in perſon to wait upon her; and a third pronouncing that it was only her own wicked conſcience that had terrified her.

As ſoon as I could command a tolerable appearance of compoſure, I ventured into the drawing-room, where I found Mr. Carroſet and St. Edward, both ſitting in ſullen ſadneſs, and Mrs. Carroſet was holding volatiles to her noſe. On my entrance, St. Edward turned his eyes toward the door, in hope, as I ſuppoſed, of ſeeing his fair-one return; but ſhe was retired for the night, and after repeated enquiries ſent from him to know of her health, the concluding anſwer was, that ſhe found herſelf too much indiſpoſed to return any more that evening.

My part now became a difficult one: I own I felt ſo much reſentment, that I thought it would be mean to ſolicit the notice of St. Edward. Had he ſhewn any com-

compunction, I would not for a moment have hesitated to have offered him consolation, and assurances of my forgiveness; but of neither was he in any degree solicitous; and I verily believe, so much was he employed in the study of his enamorata, that he totally forgot that there was such a being as myself existing. I therefore addressed Mrs. Carroset, and hoped she had recovered from the fright the alarm had occasioned. She assured me she had not, and added, that her nerves were shattered to pieces, and she had not even power to go and console her dear girl; at the mention of whom, St. Edward started from his reverie, and asked, with an impatient solicitude, how the dear creature was. His manner and expression drew from the old man something like an oath, which he half-mutteringly pronounced; and rising from his chair, and stumping up to me, he said—"We should apologize to you, ma-"dam, for all this uproar; and I cannot "find words to express my anger at that "foolish

" fooliſh girl; but it is her mother's fault,
" who would have her educated in France,
" where ſhe has learnt ſuch free manners
" and unreſtrained notions, that ſhe is not
" fit to be a viſitor in a decent ſober
" houſe."

I never heard him expreſs ſo much good ſenſe before, but it was entirely thrown away upon the major part of his auditors; for Mrs. Carroſet only begged him not to ſhock her weak nerves by any cruel reflections, either upon her, or her dear child; and St. Edward ſaid there was no occaſion for apology; he was only afraid that Miſs Carroſet had received ſuch a ſhock from the fright, as would deprive us of the pleaſure of her company for the remainder of the evening, and, perhaps, he added in a fretful tone, give her a diſlike to the houſe: then turning to me, ſaid, " Do you know how " ſhe is?"

I could have made him a ſevere reply; but I knew not in the humour he then was, how it might be received, and I dared

not venture it. I ſuppreſt my reſentment, and told him I would go and enquire, if he wiſhed it. My manner in ſaying this was marked, and he might have diſcovered what paſſed in my mind, but he thought not of me, and my condeſcenſion only ſubjected me to freſh inſult, for I was no ſooner at her chamber-door, and making enquiries of her maid, than he was there alſo; and, upon hearing that ſhe was very much indiſpoſed, he puſhed himſelf before me, and with a voice full of compaſſionate tenderneſs, ſaid, "My dear Charlotte, how "are you?" It was too much:—I did not ſtay to hear the anſwer, but returned to the parlour, where he ſoon joined me; and the arrival of the ſupper having perfectly reſtored Mr. Carroſet's good-humour, the evening was concluded with its uſual dullneſs.

Since I came up to my dreſſing-room I have given you this detail, upon which I expect your opinion; yes, Elinor, your candid free opinion. Do not any longer affect

ſect to view me in a different light from that in which I really appear: you muſt know my wretchedneſs. Was it not ſufficient to be torn from all that was dear to me, to be united to one for whom I felt not even a partiality; to feel the bitter remorſe of a broken vow; and to know myſelf the wife of a man who has not a decided preference beyond the whim of the moment; but that I muſt bear with inſolence as well as ignorance, and be inſulted before my own ſervants, for the ſake of a woman, whoſe conduct has rendered her truly contemptible, even in the eyes of thoſe very ſervants. Oh, my friend, I will lay aſide my pen, but not cloſe my letter till to-morrow.

I reſume my pen to inform you of the events of this morning. I find my ſpirits better than they were laſt night, and for a reaſon which might ſeem extraordinary to thoſe who are unacquainted with my real ſituation: it is no other than becauſe I am

again to be left alone in this caſtle, which is ſaid to be the abode of ſupernatural inhabitants. When we met at breakfaſt, Miſs Carroſet appeared in a new character: ſhe was grave, formal, and gave herſelf airs of conſequence. After the uſual complimentary enquiries were paſt, ſhe ſaid, in a very ſerious manner, that the extreme terror ſhe had experienced on the preceding evening, had given a ſevere ſhock to her ſpirits. Whether what ſhe had ſeen was a real perſon, or only a phantom of her imagination, was a matter ſhe ſhould never have reſolution, or, indeed, inclination to diſcuſs, ſtill leſs to inveſtigate; but whatever it might be, the reſult was, that ſhe could no longer ſtay in the caſtle; and as Mr. St. Edward had propoſed a tour to explore the wonders of Derbyſhire, ſhe thought there could not be a better opportunity than the preſent to make that excurſion. The time would be juſt ſufficient to fill up the ſpace which would intervene from the preſent moment, and when they would

would be wiſhing to go to London; and ſhe ſuppoſed that this propoſition would be agreeable to all parties.

In the mean time, Mr. St. Edward looked all agitation; and her mother was beginning to expatiate upon the weak ſyſtem of her nerves; when the old man, with the ſtrongeſt expreſſion of diſappointment, vociferated the following elegant harangue: — "Why, Charlotte, you are "enough to drive anybody mad. Is there "any ſuch thing in the world as pleaſing "you? Did not we come driving from Mar-"gate juſt as the prime fiſh were coming "in, becauſe forſooth you languiſhed for "the retirements of the country? and no "ſooner are we got to one of the charm-"ingeſt places that can be, again—the "beſt veniſon I ever taſted, and the choiceſt "fruit!—and becauſe you could not ſpend "Sunday like a Chriſtian, but be following "after ſome of your d—d French fancies, "and raiſing ſuch an uproar as if the houſe "was on fire, only becauſe a poor old ſer-

" vant came into a room where you had no " buſineſs; ſo we are now to be poſted " again to ſome heatheniſh place, where " we ſhall get nothing either to eat or to " drink, or a bed to ſleep on. If we ſhould " chance to light upon any comforts, " you'll be then ſure to ſet up your pipes, " and away we muſt be hurried off again " to ſome other quarter:—and I tell ye " now, miſs, once for all, that I will not " be raced about like a poſt-horſe any " longer; for I have neither money, nor " inclination, to gratify ſuch whims."

Miſs Carroſet ſtared at him for ſome moments, and the poor man looked half afraid of what he had ſaid; but when ſhe burſt into tears, he ſeemed again to renew his courage, and was going to add ſomething more to what he had advanced, when our whole attention was engaged by Mrs. Carroſet, who had fallen back in her chair in a fainting fit. Mr. Carroſet ſeemed alarmed, and dropt his ſubject: but whether or not theſe fits are frequent, or whether

ther the young lady was too much abſorbed in her own ſorrows, ſhe appeared to take but little notice of her mother, and ſeemed to conſider her fainting as a matter of courſe. For my own part, I have heard of theſe fits being counterfeited, and adapted to occaſions for which they may be beſt calculated; but never having been in the way of theſe deceptions, I can form no decided opinion as to the reality of the diſorder. My attention, therefore, was natural, and I gave her all the aſſiſtance my province required, as well as that which humanity excited.

She ſoon recovered, and was carried to her chamber, bewailing the violent diſpoſition of her huſband, whoſe boiſterous behaviour had ruined her poor nerves! Having left her to the care of her maid, and buſied myſelf in ſuperintending ſome domeſtic arrangements, I returned to the breakfaſt-parlour, where I ſoon diſcovered that all Mr. Carroſet's reaſoning had been overruled, and the Derbyſhire tour was

fixed on take place in a few days. As neither my opinion or my concurrence had been at all conſulted, I had nothing to ſay on the ſubject, and I verily believe it would never once have been thought of, had not Mr. Carroſet aſked me if I had ever been in that county, and if I ſhould like the jaunt as well as the reſt of the party?

I replied, "I never was in Derbyſhire, "and ſhould by no means wiſh to go now, "unleſs I am particularly deſired by Mr. "St. Edward." "Not go! my dear lady," ſaid Mr. Carroſet; "why to be ſure, Mr. "St. Edward and all of us muſt wiſh and "deſire you to go."

St. Edward was in earneſt converſation with Miſs Carroſet, but upon this ſpeech, and before I could return any anſwer, he ſaid, "Why, as to going—you "know, it is entirely your own affair. I "really think—I—I would have you do as "you like: it is no manner of con—— "that is, it is not neceſſary that you ſhould "go; and——"

"Mr.

"Mr. St. Edward," I replied, with more ſpirit and haughtineſs than I knew I poſſeſſed, "I ſhall not go, unleſs my com-"pany was particularly wiſhed: neither "the journey or the party would afford me "any pleaſure."

"True," ſaid Miſs Carroſet, with an air the moſt inſolent I ever ſaw, "every "thing depends upon people's own feel-"ings on theſe occaſions." "Certainly!" echoed St. Edward. I did not deign to give any anſwer, and ſoon after left the room.

No, Elinor, I will not go with them; both my pride and my reſentment urges me to this determination: I am indeed both proud and angry. There is nothing that calls forth the malignant paſſions ſo much as ill-uſage; and I cannot help thinking myſelf ill-uſed. The ſtyle of contemptuous indifference with which St. Edward treats me, is to me far more mortifying than a few haſty ſentiments would be, uttered in the warmth of honeſt anger. I

ſhall not be ſorry when they are gone; when I ſhall roam about this ancient caſtle by myſelf, and be leſs annoyed by the fearful phantoms it is ſaid to contain, than I am by its preſent viſitors. I am the better reconciled to this plan now Lord Fitzarnold has left the country; for although I have no fears either on his account or my own, his behaviour to me having been uniformly proper, yet this artful Miſs Carroſet has more than once thrown out hints, which would have created ſuſpicions dangerous to my peace, if St. Edward had not been ſo entirely devoted to her, that he had not a thought to beſtow upon any other object. For theſe reaſons, I repeat, I am glad that Lord Fitzarnold has left the country. Could you, my friend, come with your boy, you would be moſt welcome viſitors. Is ſuch a plan an abſolute impoſſibility? Am I condemned to renounce all my comforts? There was a time when I thought myſelf ſurrounded by them;—how few are now remaining! How painful is the remembrance

brance of paſt enjoyments, when we know they are never to return.

A number of circumſtances recal events endeared by tender recollection; and the preparations now making for the intended tour, remind me of a little journey we once went. Do you not know what I mean, Elinor? How I wiſhed for the morning! It was one of the fineſt I ever beheld! How gaily the ſun illumined every object! How light were our hearts! We were in a chaiſe, and Safforey and Delafore rode on each ſide. They gathered the hawthorn and the wild flowers with which the hedges were then loaded, and flung them into the chaiſe in profuſion. But you will chide me for thus alluding to ſcenes like theſe. Indeed, it is a ſubject on which I hardly dare think, much leſs truſt my pen; and it is time that I laid it aſide. Let me hear from you, if I muſt not expect to ſee you; and believe me,

Ever yours,

Arkley Caſtle, JULIA ST. EDWARD.
Oct. 7, 17—.

LETTER XVI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

ALTHOUGH my laſt letter was ſo long, and bore ſo late a date, I am ſtill furniſhed with freſh matter to communicate, and, I may add, freſh mortification. On the very day I ſent away my laſt, juſt as we were all aſſembled in the eating-room, I obſerved a phaeton driving up the avenue, and before I could expreſs my conjecture of whoſe it might be, every voice was at once exerted in vociferouſly exclaiming "It is George! "aye, it is him indeed!" "It is the "young dog himſelf!" ſaid the old man. "It is the dear fellow!" ſaid Mrs. Carroſet. The young lady only ſaid "Mercy on me! "this was what I dreaded!" and St. Edward's looks ſpoke him pleaſed at any novelty; and he ſaid, "Aye, he is juſt in time "to go with us!" This brought him to the door;

door; and without waiting for the ceremony of being announced, he ruſhed into the room in the moſt boiſterous ungentlemanlike manner I ever ſaw. As to deſcribing him, I know not how to begin!

Figure to yourſelf a young man, awkwardly tall, with a face not altogether unhandſome, if it had not been diſguiſed by the extreme of faſhion, and diſtorted by grimace; for his hair was abſolutely ſheared cloſe to his head, and his throat ſo enormouſly ſtuffed out with wrap, that the former bore no ſort of proportion to the height and breadth of his body: his coat was dark brown, with ſmall ſhining buttons; and he had pale pink pantaloons tied with white ribbon. You will, perhaps, wonder at my being ſo particular in the deſcription of his dreſs, but really he diverted me, and I am deſirous that you ſhould partake of all my amuſements, as they ſeem now to be confined to thoſe of this nature. I believe he made a ſlight bow, or rather an inclination of the head to me,

and

and then bawled out, in a voice totally void of grace or even modulation, "Well, "how are ye all? you ſee I have followed "you;—left all my friends at Margate. "Bob Guzzle vows he'll never forgive "me;—wanted me to ſtay and ſee him "run his Juniper againſt Jack Flyer's bay "mare;—goes to Brighton next week;— "Prince a Wales expected;—deal a com- "pany;—every houſe full;—and yet I "left all this fun to come to this here rum "old place, that looks for all the world "like an old church:—good rooms too "within ſide—" looking round and up to the ceiling.

"Good rooms!" replied the father; "aye, faith are they; and good dinners "too my boy. My friend here," putting his hand upon St. Edward's knee, "has ſome "of the beſt veniſon I ever taſted;—fat, "that thickneſs!" croſſing one finger over the other to give him the exact meaſure; "and yet for all this," he added, "we "are going to leave it."

"Leave

"Leave it!" ſaid the young man; "why when, where are you going! Dam-"me, did not you ſend me word you "ſhould ſtay a month longer; elſe, d'ye "think I ſhould have been at the trouble "and expence of coming all this here way "for nothing. To be ſure I liked ſeeing a "new country; and as to money, why you "know I don't mind that; but then I ex-"pected for to be a little entertained, and "ſeen ſomething of this place."

"I hope you will, Mr. George," ſaid St. Edward, who had not before ſpoken; "we are now only going to make a "little excurſion into Derbyſhire, and "at our return, I ſhall hope to prevail "upon you to prolong your ſtay to a "longer term than a month."

"I thank you, ſir," ſaid the young man; "but where are you going? and "how do you travel? All tsundle into "a coach together, hay mother?" turning to Mrs. Carroſet, who replied, "I "don't know, my dear, but I believe not."

He

He then looked round with the moſt conſcious puppiſm I ever beheld, and, with a half whiſtle, ſaid, "I wonder who "will go with me in my phaeton?" implying by his manner it was an honour of ſuch magnitude as would be almoſt preſumption to aſpire to;—but fixing his eyes on me, and making a kind of inclination of his head, "I believe, madam, you will be "the perſon I ſhall chooſe to take with "me." I ſaid I was obliged to him, but I ſhould not go.

"Not go!" ſaid he, with his mouth extended; "what ſtay here by yourſelf! "No, no,—we'll talk about that bye-and-"bye."

By this time the dinner was announced, and at the table every body ſeemed ſo occupied, that there was room for very little converſation. As ſoon as we left the gentlemen to their wine, Miſs Carroſet and her mother entered into a converſation, but which might, with more propriety, be termed

termed altercation, on the arrival of our viſitor, in which the former ſhewed no very ſiſterly affection, and the latter a very evident partiality to her ſon.

"Yes," ſaid Miſs Carroſet, "your "darling favourite, who is no better than "a blockhead, is come here to deſtroy all "our pleaſure. He is ſo vulgar, and ſo "full of himſelf, that one is aſhamed to "be ſeen with him; and I declare now he "is to be of our party, I would not give a "pin to go."

"Don't talk ſo, my dear Charlotte," ſaid Mrs. Carroſet; "you know how it "affects my nerves; and as to your diſlike "to your poor brother, I can't ſee what it is "for. Does not he dreſs and behave like "a gentleman; and has more money in "his pocket than he knows what to do "with?"

The entrance of the gentlemen put an end to their diſcourſe, and the evening being fine, a walk in the park was propoſed, when Mr. St. Edward and Miſs Carroſet

Carroſet walked by themſelves arm in arm, and appeared to be engaged in particular converſation. The young man offered me his arm, with an aſſurance of having it accepted, which would have diſguſted me had I been inclined to take it; but he is not one of thoſe that are eaſily repulſed. He not only perſiſted in ſoliciting me, but he rudely ſnatched my hand, and was placing it under his arm with a violence I could not endure, at the ſame time ſaying, "You ſhall take my arm! Why I don't come "here to ſay ſoft things to my mother. "Don't you ſee how kindly my ſiſter hangs "on the arm of your huſband; and if you "had been educated in France, as ſhe was, "you would not have had theſe prudiſh "old-faſhioned notions."

I gave him a look of the utmoſt contempt;—told him I was ſorry he did not approve of my manners, but I could not with him lament that they were not formed exactly upon the plan of his ſiſter's. I know not what poſſeſſed me to make this ſpeech; I was

I was vexed the moment I had ſaid it; for it not only gave him an opportunity of diſplaying his folly in the moſt conceited terms, but ſubjected me afterwards to the impertinence of Miſs Carroſet; and what was worſe, the reſentment of my huſband: for this ſilly coxcomb was no ſooner in their company; than he related all I had been ſaying, ſwearing he never was ſo treated in all his life. This was not loſt on his ſiſter, whoſe face reddened through the rouge; and ſhe retorted upon me by all the ſpiteful ſpeeches ſhe could invent. St. Edward pretended to laugh it off, but it was viſible enough for me to ſee how angry he was; and I was compelled to atone for the ſlip of my tongue, during the remainder of the evening, by the greateſt attention and complaiſance to each party. This was a mode of behaviour which, in ſome degree, mortified the pride of the young lady, pleaſed the old people, and ſo far humanized the youth, as to render him bearable. As to St. Edward, I ſaw he was

in

in an ill-humour, which he took but little pains to conceal; and ſeemed to take a cruel and exulting pleaſure in ſeeing me teazed by young Carroſet, who again offered to take me in his phaeton, to join the party into Derbyſhire. I again declined accepting his offer, but with the utmoſt politeneſs; for fear made me timid, and a wiſh to preſerve peace made me civil to the whole party.

Ah Elinor, you now behold your friend a hypocrite! Little did I ever ſuppoſe that I ſhould have been under the neceſſity of diſguiſing my feelings; and acting a part my ſoul diſdains: far different were my ideas of a married ſtate. The picture I had drawn was that of an union of hearts which ſhould know no diſguiſe, ſhould have no ſecrets, no reſerves, but confidence unlimited. Are there not ſuch?—but whither am I wandering? I will return to my narrative. I was juſt got into my dreſſing-room, and began to feel myſelf relieved from the embarraſſment of being the principal

cipal actor in a part for which I am totally unfit, when St. Edward entered, and in a voice of anger told Lucy to retire. He then threw himſelf into a chair, and looking at me with a degree of fierceneſs and reſentment I had never before ſeen, he ſaid, "Pray, madam, how is it that you treat "my friends in this unhandſome manner? "Do you think your beauty a ſufficient "reaſon to entitle you to theſe airs? As to "your education, if it has not taught you "to behave better, you ſhould be ſilent to "thoſe who have had the advantage of a "ſuperior one; and for your prudiſh airs, "they make me ſick. You would not "have refuſed the arm of Lord Fitzarnold, "nor declined a place in his phaeton, had "he offered it; but he knew better than "that: you only ſerved to amuſe him juſt "whilſt he was down here, and had no-"thing better to look at. You may reſt "aſſured he has forgotten you by this "time, and ſo you may as well behave "properly to my friends, though they are

"not

" not graced with titles, or honoured by " the approbation of a ſilly girl, who fan- " cies her conduct and her knowledge ſu- " perior to every body's."

I was going to reply, but after repeating the laſt words, which he drawled out in the moſt contemptuous voice, he flung out of the room; and though I intreated him to return and hear me, he would not, but haſtened to his own apartment, whither I had not courage to follow him. I paſſed ſeveral hours in ruminating on what he could mean reſpecting Lord Fitzarnold: it muſt have been cauſed by ſome vile inſinuation of Miſs Carroſet's, for I never, to the beſt of my recollection, accepted his arm in my life, nor do I know any part either of his conduct or mine, that ſhould call forth the ſmalleſt cenſure. To you I related every thing that paſſed, and except one inſtance in which I dropped an unguarded expreſſion, I know of nothing that my own heart ſhould condemn.

When

When we met at breakfaſt the next morning, each appeared conſcious of ſome embarraſſment, and nobody ſeemed inclined to begin a converſation. The young man paid all his attention to me, and again importuned me to make one of the party in the intended tour, and as I timidly declined his offers, (for I begin to be afraid of St. Edward,) he the more forcibly preſſed them; and I thought the looks of my huſband and Miſs Carroſet ſeemed to ſpeak a language of ſuſpicion on my conduct: when, therefore, I ſaid I ſhould remain here during their abſence, young Carroſet aſked me if I ſhould ſtay here alone, and the looks which were then ſo directly pointed, made me anſwer in a heſitation, I believed I ſhould. "Then, by G—d, "madam," replied this tormentor, "the "laws of gallantry will not permit me to "leave you alone, had I no other induce-"ment; but with your permiſſion," bowing to St. Edward, "ſir, I ſhall ſtay and "endeavour to amuſe Mrs. St. Edward."

I con-

I confeſs, my heart beat with paſſion I believe, for I felt the colour riſe in my face when my huſband replied, with the utmoſt coolneſs, he had no objection. As ſoon as I could command my voice into a tone of compoſure, I begged him not to think of ſuch a thing, for I aſſured him I ſhould be a very dull companion, and ſhould make a rule of not ſtirring out whilſt Mr. St. Edward was abſent. "Oh—what a "Gothic notion is that," ſaid he: "Yes, "yes,—I ſhall make you break that pious "reſolution I promiſe you: we'll find ſome "pleaſant drives and excurſions, and you'll "ſoon change your note, or my name is "not George." Did you ever hear ſuch a wretch? I was obliged to exert myſelf by very ſeriouſly aſſuring him, that I ſhould ſtrictly adhere to the plan I had laid down; and I was otherwiſe well aware, that his ideas of amuſement and mine were ſo totally oppoſite, that our time would be rendered extremely irkſome to each other. He looked conceitedly ſignificant; and during

during our altercation, St. Edward and Miſs Carroſet were converſing in a half whiſper.

Cannot you, my friend, come to me, ſhould I be reduced to the neceſſity of remaining alone with this coxcomb? Gladly will I receive any admonitions you may think neceſſary, to enable me to ſteer a right courſe in the labyrinth of unmerited evils which ſeem to await me, and for which I feel at times totally unequal. Before the family of the Carroſets came, and during St. Edward's abſence, I thought of inviting Mrs. Clifford to come and ſtay with me; indeed, ſince the Derbyſhire ſcheme has been projected, I began a letter of invitation to her, which I left upon my writing table, but have never been able to find it ſince. As it happened it was of no conſequence. I urged my wiſhes to ſee her, and to enjoy her company when I was alone, with that warmth of expreſſion which my ſincere friendſhip for her dictated; but I wrote no particulars of my

ſituation, or gave any of my free opinions, which I ſo unreſervedly relate to you. I would on no account have any of my letters to you ſeen; they are to you alone, and for many reaſons, are only fit for your peruſal. The feelings of my heart are apt to be too pointedly expreſſed, and, perhaps, ought to be leſs ſo; but I am got into the habit of writing my thoughts as they flow, and I feel that it eaſes my heart of oppreſſion. In the belief that you feel an intereſt in whatever concerns me, and although my narrations can boaſt of but little variety, and as far as regards myſelf, can afford you no pleaſure, I will nevertheleſs continue them as a relief from dwelling upon reflections cruelly painful. Adieu, and believe me

Ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

Arkley Caſtle,
Oct. 11, 17—.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. Clifford.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I MUST begin my letter with the ſubject neareſt my heart, and I muſt beg and entreat that, if nothing very particular ſhould detain you at Crayborne, you will, as ſoon as you conveniently can after the receipt of this, make your long promiſed viſit to our friend at Arkley. I urge this requeſt in the ſtrongeſt manner, as your going to her at this time will be of the moſt important ſervice; and the neceſſity of your viſit will be proved by the relation I am going to communicate.

In ſeveral letters lately received from Julia, I am led to believe ſhe ſtands greatly in need of a proper female companion; one who can protect her as well as give her counſel; and I had (on diſcovering traits

in her huſband's character which I never ſuſpected) intended to have taken my boy with me, and to make her a viſit myſelf. Every thing was arranged for this purpoſe, and I meant to have ſurpriſed my friend by appearing before her without any notice of my intention, when the encloſed letter arrived from the Weſt-Indies. I make no ſcruple of putting it into your hands; the contents will ſecure ſecreſy, and ſhew you the reaſons why my viſit muſt now be poſtponed, as well as the neceſſity of making your's. I will not therefore detain you from reading my huſband's letter, and delay you from the neceſſary preparations for your journey, which I entreat may be ſpeedy, and allow of no punctilious ceremony. The ſad predicament in which my friend now ſtands muſt apologize for all intruſion, as well as the earneſt requeſt of,

Dear Madam,

Your truly obliged and ſincere friend,

ELINOR SAFFOREY.

Ledcombe, October 17.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

Captain Safforey to Mrs. Safforey.

MY DEAREST ELINOR,

TWO days before your letter arrived, your brother heard of Julia's marriage. The intelligence came from a quarter we could not doubt, and which your's corroborated. I ſhould fail in attempting to give you any idea of what he has, and ſtill does ſuffer, although he is now much more calm and compoſed than he was; yet I know not from which I have moſt to fear, the violence of frenzy which firſt ſeized him, and was in ſome degree vented in the ravings of a lunatic, or the ſullen agony in which he pours forth the moſt melancholy and bitter lamentations. Three nights I watched him in the ravings of deſpair; and on the two following nature was ſo exhauſted, that I really doubted his exiſtence.

Since that time he has been ſlowly recovering, but with ſuch frequent relapſes of wildneſs and miſery, as to render me fearful for the preſervation of his ſenſes. It would ſeem unkind, my dear Elinor, to execrate your ſex when I am writing to one who poſſeſſes all its excellences, and is entitled to my fondeſt love; but why did Julia behave thus to your brother? Ah why did ſhe marry? No vows of whatſoever nature could have been more binding than were theirs. Theſe were all upon which he reſted his ſecurity, all that enabled him to look forward with hope, and mitigated the pangs of parting. It was this which enabled him to combat with ſickneſs and contagion, gave ſpirit to his heart and valour to his arm. Indeed, my dear Elinor, it is not in my power to deſcribe his ſufferings, and I fear a ſtill deeper tragedy will cloſe the ſcene. I do not mean his death, which might probably prevent ſtill greater misfortunes, I mean his coming to England to inveſtigate his wrongs.

Before

Before this fatal blow to his peace, he had ſettled every thing for his departure; and in the laſt few days, when he appeared to poſſeſs cooler moments, I urged him to remain here; I aſſured him I would not leave him, but would ſtay and do everything in my power to afford him comfort. He replied, with more calm deliberation than I had before obſerved, or indeed wiſhed, for it ſeemed the reſult of a fixed purpoſe, that it was not now in the power of any human being to give him comfort; he had laid down a plan to which he ſhould adhere with determined reſolution. As his leave had been for ſome time obtained, and he had before only waited for me to accompany him, he ſhould now go immediately, as he did not wiſh to have me a witneſs of the conſequences which might follow his return.

I dread the effects of his diſappointment, and I loſe not a moment in giving you this intimation of his deſign. I hope it will reach you before he arrives; but this is

very uncertain, as he will loſe no time. I have uſed every endeavour to get leave to accompany him, but without ſucceſs.—I think it might be proper to give Mrs. St. Edward ſome hint of his return, that ſhe may be in ſome degree guarded againſt the ſurpriſe of ſeeing him, as well as prepared for the effects of that deſpair to which ſhe has ſo unfortunately driven him. The gloomy ſteadineſs he has adopted gives me a fearful preſage of his deſigns.

I know you will do all in your power on this trying occaſion, which will likewiſe be an apology to you for my writing on no other ſubject. A thouſand thanks to you for your good wiſhes, for your kind expreſſions; I return them ſevenfold. May every bleſſing be redoubled on you and my boy, and both be preſerved for the arms of, my deareſt Elinor,

Your faithful and affectionate
huſband,
GEORGE SAFFOREY.

——— Sept. 19, 17—.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

Mrs. Clifford to Mrs. Safforey.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I DELAY not a moment to anſwer your letter; I wiſh I could as readily comply with your requeſt. A ſtrange fatality ſeems to hang over our friend, as well as to render our deſigns abortive. My uncle has been confined near three weeks with an unſettled gout, and for the laſt few days has been dangerouſly ill with ſpaſms in his ſtomach. Were he not in the moſt imminent danger, and my duty and attendance abſolutely neceſſary, I would not for a moment delay going to our dear Julia, whoſe ſituation is indeed moſt critical. The apprehenſions ſo juſtly entertained by Mr. Safforey, as well as the hints you have thrown out of St. Edward's conduct, adds

to my uneaſineſs at not being able at this time to leave Crayborne. I know not what to adviſe, nor how to ſuggeſt any method whereby we might prevent the impending danger. I ſee with you the neceſſity of your remaining where you are; for ſhould Mr. Delafore arrive, and find you at Arkley, it will admit not the ſhadow of a doubt but he would follow you thither; an event which, if poſſible, we muſt endeavour to counteract. Why does not Mrs. St. Edward accompany her huſband in all the excurſions he makes? I cannot think it right that ſhe ſhould always remain at home. It may ſtill not be too late for her to make one in their party; or ſhe may be perſuaded to follow them. Whatever happens, ſhe will be moſt ſafe in her huſband's company. But if ſhe cannot gain that ſuccour and protection to which ſhe is intitled by the tendereſt claim, may that juſt God, who permits the diſtreſſes of his creatures for the wiſeſt and beſt purpoſes, which our finite

finite reaſon cannot diſcover, guard and preſerve her. In this truſt I remain,

Dear madam,

Your ever faithfully obliged

ANN CLIFFORD.

Crayborne, Oct. 17, 17—.

LETTER XX.

Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.

I AM once more alone, my dear Elinor; and this ſtupendous caſtle, contrary to all other inſtances, exhibits a more lively picture, and conveys more content to my mind, than when its late gay viſitors inhabited its walls: yes, the ſolemn ſtillneſs which now reigns in every apartment, the gloomy light admitted by the ſmall panes of glaſs, and the echoing footſteps, which vibrate in hollow ſounds as they paſs through the ſpacious rooms, are more congenial to

my mind than the numerous candles, the perpetual hum of voices, and the quick clatter of haſty ſteps in the buſy occurrences of employment. With much difficulty I evaded the preſſing ſolicitations of young Carroſet to take me in his phaeton; with difficulty was I reſtrained from affronting him; for his behaviour grew to ſuch a height of impertinence, that nothing but my fears of offending the reſt of the family kept me from declaring my real ſentiments. St. Edward, as I before obſerved, ſeemed to take a particular delight in hearing him make fulſome ſpeeches to me, and ſeeing my diſtreſs at being, as it were, compelled to receive them. He had even the audacity to hint to me the terms of fondneſs upon which his ſiſter and St. Edward were; and added, that it was ſetting an example worthy my imitation, and which my huſband ſeemed pointing out to me to follow. My patience was nearly exhauſted, and I ſaid loud enough for the whole family to hear, that however he

he might think to profit by ſo pernicious an example, it only ſerved to fill me with diſguſt and contempt; and, I added, that if he had any thoughts of ſtaying at Arkley with me, he would find himſelf diſappointed, for from the ſpecimen I had of his behaviour now, I ſhould in that caſe think myſelf obliged to be ſhut up entirely from his company, in order to preſerve the honour and credit of my huſband as well as my own. I fixed my eyes full upon St. Edward as I cloſed my ſpeech, half trembling and half aſſured; but he ſeemed to be too much engaged with Miſs Carroſet to regard any thing I ſaid.

On the ſilly young man my ſpeech had the deſired effect; he bit his lips, and coloured with paſſion: "Very well, madam," ſaid he, "juſt as you pleaſe: faith I don't "want to carry you away againſt your in-"clination. I ſuppoſe you have been "reading romances; but no ſuch things "happen now-a-days;—no, no, depend "upon it you'll never be carried off by "force:

" force: but let me tell you, madam, " there are thoſe, aye, and handſome ones " too, that won't ſtay to be aſked twice to " ride in my phaeton. As to ſtaying here, " I never intended that; I only ſaid ſo out " of fun, for I'm ſure I ſhould find it " plaguy dull; and I would not interrupt " your meditations in this here old caſtle: " no, no, we'll leave you to make aſſigna- " tions with the rooks, or whatever elſe " you can find."

Vulgar and impertinent as were theſe remarks, and uttered with the moſt evident tokens of anger, yet I could in my heart have thanked him for it, ſince it relieved me from the moſt irkſome attentions, and freed me from the apprehenſion of being left alone with him.—The following morning was fixed for their departure, and I hope I may be forgiven when I confeſs that I hailed its approach with joy. St. Edward took a cold leave of me; Miſs Carroſet, affecting an affable ſmile, put out her hand with an air of haughty free-

dom;

dom; the old man buſtled up and took a kiſs, ſaying he hoped we ſhould meet again ſooner than we expected; Mrs. Carroſet made ſome formal ſpeeches like thanks, wiſhed I was going with them, and hoped they ſhould encounter no dangers to terrify and alarm her. She, with her huſband and maid, the lap-dog, and band-boxes, very compleatly filled their chariot; St. Edward and Miſs Carroſet in the phaeton; and the young man in his own alone, in which he ſtood up to diſplay his figure, bowed with an affected air of careleſſneſs, and drawing the reins up to his chin, ſmacked his whip and drove off.

Could I be ſure of never ſeeing them again, I ſhould feel ſtill more pleaſed than I do, but the idea of experiencing the ſame again hangs over me, and throws a damp upon my ſpirits, which are at no time very good. Yet, ſurely, St. Edward will grow tired of his preſent attachment; I never knew him fond of any thing for ſuch a length of time before; but he ſeems as much

much pleaſed with her now as when ſhe was the novelty of a day. Perhaps he is really in love with her, and never felt that paſſion in its trueſt extent before, for I believe there are many ſpurious ſorts; if ſo, I pity him, and perhaps I ought not to have told his weakneſſes as I have done, even to you, my friend; and yet there is ſuch a relief in unburdening the mind of its griefs, in depoſiting our ſecrets in a boſom faithful as one's own, that although I have ever held that woman in contempt who expoſed the faults of her huſband, yet to you it does not ſtrike me in the ſame light: or is it that blindneſs to my own faults makes me thus extenuate them? It may be ſo, but they ſeem to me pious confeſſions, by which my mind is ſtrengthened, and better enabled to ſupport thoſe viciſſitudes of adverſe fortune to which I am ſubjected. I endeavour to diſſipate reflections, the indulgence of which would abſorb all my faculties, by various avocations. I have been ſince their departure

arranging

arranging my domeſtic affairs as far as comes within my province; I have viſited my old family, from whom I derive a very great pleaſure; and though laſt, not leaſt, I have been employed in giving a relation of events, trifling indeed in themſelves, yet ſuch as, being neareſt my heart, are, I am certain, not unintereſting to you. Adieu my ever dear friend. I know if you can, you will come to

Your affectionate,

Arkley Caſtle, JULIA ST. EDWARD.
Oct. 18, 17—.

LETTER XXI.

Miſs Carroſet to Miſs Baynard.

Buxton, October 21.

YOU will wonder, my dear Maria, to ſee a letter dated from this place, and particularly ſo late in the ſeaſon, but the weather is uncommonly fine, and Buxton is what

what is called full, that is, there are ſeveral families, and ſome very pleaſant people. You may congratulate me, my dear, on having left that horrid place Arkley Caſtle, where I was abſolutely near being deprived of my ſenſes, and where I was liable to continual affronts from that ſqueamiſh thing Mrs. St. Edward. She is left there alone, and it is the fitteſt place for her. Would you believe it, ſhe affects propriety, or rather prudery, in ſo high a degree, that ſhe refuſed to accept a place in my brother's phaeton; and becauſe he ſaid a few gallant things to her, ſhe thought proper to reſent it; when, if ſhe had engaged in a little harmleſs flirtation, we might all have been comfortable, and made the journey pleaſant: but ſhe is, as I ſaid before, ſuch an old-faſhioned ſtarched piece of goods,—well, I will leave her and her old notions in the old caſtle as relics of antiquity, while I proceed to give you an account of our journey. To be ſure there never was ſuch places as we have been to ſee! How

How people can take pleaſure in ſuch ſights I cannot imagine! They got me into one cavern all dripping with wet, with great ſtones rolling under one's feet, in a place where you cannot ſtand upright, and two or three of the moſt hideous old women to attend you I ever beheld, who talked in a dialect I could not underſtand, but ſeemed to expreſs the beauties as well as the wonders of the place; at the ſame time holding out their ſhrivelled hands, from which I ſhrunk back as I would from a toad. St. Edward, George, and my father went to another cavern, which they ſaid was much larger, but I would not proceed with them, for when I came to the entrance, ſeveral of theſe creatures, whom I can ſcarce believe to be human, took off my hat without even aſking my leave, cruſhed the feather, told me I muſt tye a handkerchief over my eyes, and would have put a filthy tallow candle into my hand, in order to light me into this ſubterraneous abode. I puſhed them away, recovered

recovered my hat, and deſired St. Edward would conduct me back to the inn. He grumbled with a kind of childiſh impatience, leaſt he ſhould looſe the ſight, and would abſolutely have refuſed to return with me, had not the reſt of the party promiſed to wait till he came back. I refuſed his arm, and walked as ſlow as I could on purpoſe to vex him, and ſo ſullen, that I would not ſpeak a word. I have no notion of his giving himſelf ſuch airs, to prefer going into a naſty damp frightful cave to the pleaſure of my company! Was it not inſufferable?

When we came to the inn, we found my mother in the chaiſe with the horſes taken off. She was ſo impreſſed with fear by accounts ſhe had been told of the cavern, that ſhe fancied the houſe unſafe, and no perſuaſions could get her into it. I ſoon laughed her out of her fears, and ſhe ventured into the parlour, where we waited more than an hour before we were joined by the reſt of our party, who ſeemed highly

highly pleaſed with the wonders they had ſeen, all but my father, who declared nothing ſhould ever again get him to venture into ſuch an infernal hole; that he never expected to come out alive; that he felt the damps in his ſtomach; and he ſuppoſed from the appearance of the inn, he ſhould get nothing fit to eat. Aye, it was juſt what he expected when he left Arkley, to come upon ſuch a wild-gooſe chace, at ſuch a time of the year too!

During this time George was relating to my mother the dangers he had been encountering in the cavern, where he ſaid he had croſſed a wide river under a rock, which hung down ſo cloſe upon him, that he was put to the neceſſity of lying upon his back in the boat, with nothing but candles to light them! "Tell me no more, "my dear boy," ſaid my mother, "for I "ſhudder to think of the eſcape you have "had." "Aye," replied my father, "and "I muſt needs be hoiſted upon a fellow's "back as if I was going to be flogged, and

"ſo

"ſo carried through what George calls a "river!" "Calls a river!" retorted George; "and ſo it is a river, and a wide river "too!" "Pooh pooh—a little water only," ſaid my father, "which your fears magni- "fied into a river!" "My fears," replied George, "that's a good one! when the "truth is, your's were ſo great, that you "ſhut your eyes all the way to prevent "ſeeing the danger." It is impoſſible to ſay how this altercation would have concluded, had not the dinner at that inſtant made its appearance, which gave but little ſatisfaction; nothing was good; every one of us ſeemed to be out of humour. St. Edward promiſed a better repaſt where we were to ſup; and ſo indeed it happened, for we find every thing good and in proper order here.

The next day we dined in a large mixed company, which is the faſhion at this place, in a very large inn called the Hall. We have a motley ſet, it is true; but I like

like to ſee ſuch a variety of characters, as they afford matter for a deal of amuſing criticiſm. I will give them to you juſt as they ſtrike my fancy, and pretty much as they are. To begin with the church, as in duty bound, becauſe, inſtead of ſetting an example of humility, they are always the foremoſt in pride and conſequence,—Doctor Bullface, a dignitary of the church, his wife and daughters, take up more room, give themſelves more airs, and would be conſidered of more conſequence, than any others. Two maiden ſiſters named Crotchet, are of a more harmleſs nature: it is the firſt time they have ever ventured into a public place by themſelves, though their age would have inſured their ſafety any time theſe laſt fifteen years; but they ſtill affect an air of childiſh fearfulneſs, which ſubjects them to continual alarms. Alderman Paſty, his wife and niece, are no ſmall fools. The widow of an eminent brewer, with a ſickly ſon, does not think little of herſelf. Theſe, with

with a phyſician, a couple of Iriſhmen who ſeem to belong only to themſelves, and are of no profeſſion, an old officer on half-pay, with a few other inſignificants not worth noticing, compoſe our party. I have ſeen no one perſon here yet that I would be at the ſmalleſt pains to make a conqueſt of, I therefore ſtill retain St. Edward in my chains, notwithſtanding he ſometimes provokes me, and we have had ſeveral quarrels; but to do him juſtice, he does not ſeem comfortable till they are made up again.—We were very well received in this goodly company, for we make no deſpicable appearance. We have three carriages, five men ſervants, and two Abigails. I overheard, from my window, Doctor Bullface making enquiry who and what we were; and I obſerved at ſupper that he relaxed ſomewhat of his pompous dignity, aſked my mother after her nervous head-ach, and if the young lady, meaning me, did not honour Buxton for amuſement, not health, as, if he might judge by her looks,

looks, ſhe ſeemed to enjoy an ample portion of that choice bleſſing. During this ſpeech his wife and daughters were ſurveying me from head to foot. To ſome people this might have been diſtreſſing, to me it was not: I have none of that mauvaiſe honte which awkward Engliſh-educated girls feel on theſe occaſions; it is long ſince I experienced any of thoſe ſymptoms. I returned ſtare for ſtare, and would have entered into converſation with them, had I not thought it would have flattered their pride, of which they ſeem to have a full ſhare; and St. Edward that moment coming up and taking my hand, I walked off.

George amuſes himſelf in playing off the two Miſs Crotchets, and inventing ſtories to alarm them. It is very well he has found ſuch an exerciſe for his genius, as he is a ſad boor, and would be an eternal plague to me, if he had nothing elſe to engage his attention. As to my father, he does pretty well, as the table is in general well provided, and that is all he

cares about; though he frequently ſends ſighs of regret for the veniſon at Arkley. St. Edward mentioned ſending for ſome, but he does not love trouble, and I ſhall not remind him of anything there. By the way I am inclined to think his cara-ſpoſa will not paſs all her ſolitary hours alone: ſhe could not poſſibly have been ſo averſe to either of my brother's plans, if ſhe had not a pleaſanter one of her own. I gave a little hint of this to her huſband, but he either did not or would not under-ſtand it. What a delectable treat a diſ-covery of this nature would be! He is warm in all his purſuits; and I think he would not be deficient in reſentment. Who knows but your friend may one day be the ſovereign lady of Arkley Caſtle! I ſay the ſovereign, becauſe I would admit of no competitors. Ah—how I would change the whole arrangement there; ferret the old ſpectres out of their holes; and totally annihilate thoſe hideous old ſervants about whom they make ſuch a fuſs. Theſe are

caſtles

caſtles which I build at preſent, but which may be as firm as that at Arkley in ſome future time.—The Miſſes Bullface have aſked me to accompany them in a walk: perhaps they may think this mighty condeſcending, but I ſhall ſoon give them to underſtand my opinion on that ſubject. However, it obliges me to lay down my pen, but I will not cloſe this at preſent.

Theſe girls are inſufferably proud; they think nothing is equal to fat preferment, rolling at eaſe, and looking down upon their inferiors. I was perfectly ſickened with their great acquaintance; nothing under a title ſeemed to come under that denomination. "When papa dined with Lord "this, and mama went a ſhopping with "Lady that; and we were aſked by Sir "Thomas what we thought!" This was the nature of their converſation: to be ſure I gave myſelf as many airs in my turn, though not exactly in the ſame way; and thus we parted with no very good opinion of each.

When I returned to the Hall I perceived that ſomething more than uſual was in agitation, and although I ſaw no new faces or any freſh retinue, it was confidently announced that a lord was arrived, and not only a lord, but a Lord Robert Carrington, brother to the Duke of Delmont.—I haſtened to my apartment; I ſummoned my maid to arrange my wardrobe, and from it I ſelected ſuch of my paraphernalia as I thought moſt captivating, and beſt adapted to looks which I determined ſhould be pointed to do execution. Yes, Maria, I ſhould like to hook this lord; it would be a conqueſt worthy your friend; and although I had arranged in my mind a plan of execution reſpecting Arkley and its preſent inhabitants, yet the arrival of this nobleman has cauſed my ideas to ſoar to a much higher region. I dare ſay I ſhall have many competitors even in this narrow circle; but I defy their powers:—I think I may without vanity preſume I have more knowledge in the arts of conqueſt than all the

the miſſes here put together. You, my friend, too, muſt give place to ſo important an undertaking, ſo farewell for the preſent. Perhaps I may again add more before I conclude.

I have ſeen and converſed with Lord Robert Carrington, Maria! and he is juſt ſuch a perſon as I ſhould like to lead captive in my chains; I ſay literally as to perſon, for he is too reſerved, too particular, too ſcrutinizing, too conſcientious, and let me add, too modeſt for the choſen companion of my heart. But that you may form ſome judgment, I will give you a ſketch of what has juſt paſſed. When he made his entrée, he joined our motley ſet with an eaſe of manners which ſpoke him the man of faſhion, and took his place at our table. Doctor Bullface affected to know him; and after puffing out his cheeks, erecting his eye-brows, and pretending a conſequential cough, he made his way next to him,—hoped his grace the Duke of Delmont was well, and that

he had the honour of ſeeing his lordſhip in perfect health. The ſatisfaction he had of meeting him at this place would, he hoped, not be leſſened by hearing that his lordſhip came to Buxton on account of his health. To this profuſion of civility Lord Robert anſwered with the utmoſt politeneſs, and aſſured the worthy doctor, that he did not come here for his health, but merely took it in his way as he was paſſing through the county. Theſe compliments being over, Lord Robert addreſſed one of the Miſs Crotchets, as ſhe was placed next him; but whether or not ſhe had never been ſpoken to by a lord before, or for what other reaſon I know not, but ſhe coloured, heſitated, and gave him no anſwer.

I wanted to enter into converſation with him, and he ſeemed particularly to diſtinguiſh me by his looks, but it was abſolutely impoſſible; that inſufferable Doctor Bullface engroſſed him wholly; and ſuch was his pride and pomp that he would not deign to ſpeak to any other perſon. When my

father

father ſaid "Well doctor, have you rode "out this morning?" a ſtiff nod was the only anſwer; and when ſomebody elſe aſked if he had ſeen the papers, a haughty "No!" was the only return. Lord Robert did not appear to like his ſituation, ſo encircled by the doctor's greatneſs: he tried ſeveral times to make the converſation more general, but he failed in the attempt; and it was rendered ſtill more unpleaſant by my ſtupid brother, who, thinking to make himſelf conſpicuous, bawled out from the bottom of the table, "Is there any news my lord? I ſhould be "glad to hear ſomething that was new, for "we are all getting d—d dull!" Doctor Bullface contrived to engage his lordſhip's attention, ſo as to prevent his giving any anſwer to the ill-timed queſtion of George, which ſerved to make the company more reſerved than they were before, except one or two, who endeavoured to ſtifle a laugh; and I expreſſed my reſentment ſufficiently by my looks. But this was to be a day of

mortification for me; for when a walk was propoſed, and I thought I might ſecure a chance of introducing myſelf to his lordſhip, that fooliſh fellow St. Edward came up, and taking my hand, addreſſed me by the appellation of his dear, a ſilly way he has, which he knows not how to confine to proper times and places. This led to a moſt unpleaſant miſtake; for, having reached the ear of Lord Carrington, he inſtantly ſuppoſed us to be man and wife!—no great proof you will think of his ſenſe; for few men and their wives uſe ſuch endearing epithets in theſe days: however, upon hearing the name of St. Edward, he immediately aſked if I was not Mrs. St. Edward, and being anſwered in the negative, he profeſſed a ſort of wonder, and honoured me with a very ſcrutinizing look. I had ſoon after this an opportunity of exchanging a few words with him, and then formed that opinion of his merits which I gave you at the beginning of this: nevertheleſs I ſhall not abandon my project for a

little difference in opinion; perhaps I can adopt my ſentiments to his! I would make a greater ſacrifice to become a duke's ſiſter! I will conclude my long letter in the delightful hope that I ſhall ſucceed; and believe me in all ſituations, my dear Maria,

Ever yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

LETTER XXII.

Lord Robert Carrington to Mr. Audley.

Buxton, October 31, 17—.

WHEN I left you, my dear Audley, I had no deſign of viſiting this place, ſtill leſs of making any ſtay here, nor, indeed, do I know that I ſhall remain another day; and when I tell you I have not met with a ſingle being I can call my acquaintance, you will wonder that I have already paſſed three days at Buxton. The variety of odd

characters which compose the present inhabitants of the Hall, on my first introduction to them, in some degree disgusted me: on a nearer acquaintance, their several humours served to amuse me; and as I became intimate, I also became interested and diverted. It is no matter how a man passes his time or where, provided he can derive satisfaction from the companions with whom he associates. There are few from whom we can gain knowledge, but there are many from whom one may glean some information; and in a mixture, such as forms our present society, a knowledge of the human heart is more easily obtained than in a more select circle. As this is a study which no man can be too well acquainted with, I therefore do not think my time absolutely thrown away in devoting a short portion of it to this investigation.

I shall not pretend to give you each character as it presents itself, but relate some of our conversations as they happened, by which you may form your own opinion of

my

my new acquaintance; and were I a vain fellow, I ſhould begin with telling you, that a pair of the moſt brilliant eyes I ever ſaw have ſpoken more in my favour than words could expreſs. "How do you like "Buxton, my lord?" ſaid Miſs Carroſet; "I am afraid it has not charms ſufficient "to give us hopes that your lordſhip will "honour us with your company for any "time." This was uttered in the kindeſt accents, from lips of coral guarding rows of pearls. My anſwer was I hope expreſſive of the honour ſhe did me, but it would have been returned with more gallantry and better grace, had not a ſmall miſtake at the moment helped to embarraſs my manners by confuſing my ideas. A Mr. St. Edward, to whoſe name I was not quite a ſtranger, had addreſſed this fair-one by the appellation of "My dear!" I had heard Mrs. St. Edward was beautiful, and I was ſuch a confounded old-faſhioned dog, as to form the ſtrange ſuppoſition that they were man and wife; and I had but juſt

time to correct my exploded opinion, when the before mentioned ſpeech from the lady required my attention. In this awkward moment, therefore, I am afraid I acquitted myſelf but ill, and ſtill added to my want of gallantry by aſking (which I could not for the life of me avoid,) where and which was Mrs. St. Edward; for by the freedom of his addreſs to Miſs Carroſet, I ſuppoſed her to be the ſiſter of his wife, who, I imagined, muſt needs be in the company.

It was an unlucky queſtion:—the languiſhing ſoftneſs of the young lady's eyes was inſtantly changed to a fierceneſs of expreſſion by no means engaging, and ſhe haſtily replied, "Mrs. St. Edward! do you "know her? Why ſhe has no taſte for "travelling or mixing with company; ſhe "takes more pleaſure in ſitting whole days "in a hideous old caſtle, finding out "beauties of nature in the park and the "grounds, taking ſketches of them, and "making diſcoveries of this kind, which

"ſeem

" ſeem to ſuit her taſte; and indeed ſhe is
" a very odd character take her altoge-
" ther." " But ſurely theſe are amiable
" traits! Are you not related to her?"
" Related to her!" repeated Miſs Carroſet;
" Heaven and earth forbid! I aſſure you,
" my lord, all theſe ſimple amuſements are
" only a pretence of innocence. Viſiting the
" ſick, adminiſtering to the wants of the
" poor, were all mighty pretty things to
" talk of, but charity covers a multitude
" of ſins: and I hope I am not ill-natured,
" but I could venture to pronounce that
" Mrs. St. Edward, with all her love of
" ſolitude and retirement, is at this very
" moment *not alone!*" " But my dear
" Miſs Carroſet," ſaid I, and taking her
fan, began flirting it with great gallantry,
for I had my reaſons for wiſhing her to go
on, " does her huſband ſuſpect any thing
" of this nature? Is he not fond of her?
" They have not I think been married
" long; and as her friend, it is pity but
" you would adviſe her, and with your ſu-
" perior

"perior knowledge of the world, admo-
"niſh her againſt appearances which may be
"prejudicial to her peace." "O—as to that,
"ſhe was ſufficiently intreated to accom-
"pany us here, but ſhe had her reaſons,
"I dare ſay." I was going to reply, when Doctor Bullface interrupted the diſcourſe, by begging pardon for breaking in upon our tête-a-tête, but his daughter, Miſs Georgina Bullface, had brought one of the moſt beautiful ſpars to ſhew my lordſhip; "And really," ſaid this ſtately prebendary, "ſhe has ſhewn a wonderful taſte
"in the collection ſhe has made ſince we
"have been here, and wiſhes to have your
"lordſhip's opinion."

I anſwered him, I am afraid, rather impatiently, though with due reſpect to the young lady's attention, for I wanted to hear more of Mrs. St. Edward, about whom I am in ſome degree intereſted, for a reaſon you ſhall ſome time know. I reſpect the church as a body, but there are members of it which I do not reſpect. Doctor

Bullface

Bullface is a ſycophant, who runs after titles, and has gained his dignities by meanneſs. He had been giving me a hiſtory of the people who are here, all of whom he held in the moſt ſovereign contempt; not for any particular vice in their characters, but becauſe they had moſt of them gained an independency from their induſtry, being, as he ſaid, ſprung from trade, and ignoble of deſcent; not but if the doctor's own pedigree had been traced, it could not have boaſted of more noble anceſtors than thoſe on whom he looked down with ſo much inſolence. Mr. St. Edward, he ſaid, was of good family, and was now in poſſeſſion of a good eſtate; but who the Carroſets were he did not ſeem to know. The father was vulgar, and had evidently been in trade, but the daughter ſeemed to know ſomething of genteel life, and were ſhe not ſo very forward and conceited, he ſhould not object to his girls being acquainted with her; but as to the ſon, he was the moſt incorrigible puppy he had

ever

ever beheld. "And it is a cruel thing, "my lord," ſaid the doctor, "that one is "obliged to aſſociate with people of this "caſt. For my own part," continued he, "though I am not proud, I confeſs I al-"ways ſeek the company of my ſuperiors, "and my dear Mrs. Bullface and myſelf "have ſo brought up our girls, that they "never degrade and let themſelves down, "by making any acquaintance with thoſe "beneath them; and we have given them "educations which will, in ſome degree, "ſupply the want of fortunes, and fit "them for ſituations in life, ſhould they "be called into them, of the higheſt "rank."

Mrs. Bullface is a mere echo to her huſband; and the girls are two ſtrange uncouth things, with whom I can form no intimacy: inſtead, therefore, of talking to the young lady on the beauties of ſpars and minerals, I aſked the doctor if he did not think it odd, that Mrs. St. Edward, who, I had been informed, was a very beau-

tiful

tiful young woman, and lately married, ſhould not accompany her huſband here. He ſaid he knew nothing of them: it was not the age for married people to be much together; but he never inveſtigated matters of that ſort. I could have anſwered this in a way he would not have liked, but he has lived too long under the influence of his own opinions to be eaſily put out of them, and I am not going to ſet up for a reformer of manners.

A Mr. Tracy added to our group at ſupper. He ſaid he came from London; and upon being aſked for news, he replied that the papers muſt have informed us of events later than any he could bring, as he had been five days coming from the metropolis. "Five days!" repeated young Carroſet; "then I ſuppoſe, ſir, you have "been ill upon the road!" "No, ſir, I "have not; I never was better in my life." "Why then," replied the young man, "how did you travel?" "In my own "carriage," ſaid the ſtranger; "And your

"own

"own horſes I preſume," replied Carroſet. "Yes, ſir." "Why even then you muſt "have been a deviliſh time crawling on! "—ſurely you had better have poſted! "You have only a pair I ſuppoſe?" "But "one, ſir," returned Mr. Tracy. "O,—a "gig: well, but the devil's in it if you "might not have come at a better rate, "or your horſe muſt be deviliſhly out of "condition!" "Not the leaſt, ſir: there "is not a horſe in England in better con-"dition, or he ſhould not draw me." "Well, ſir, I do not comprehend your "mode of travelling; but rot me if I had "not rather get into a ſtage-coach, which "does now and then whip off pretty ra-"pidly, than I would be condemned to be "be five days creeping from London to "Buxton!" "It is very poſſible you "would, ſir," replied Mr. Tracy; "and "could I feel myſelf comfortable in a ſtage-"coach, I ſhould have no objection to "travelling in one; for, on account of "weather, and other inconveniences, I

"might

" might find it preferable to the carriage
" I have; and I would by no means have
" you ſuppoſe, that I am above travelling
" in a ſtage-coach; I think them excellent
" modes of conveyance: but I have par-
" ticular notions, and as I make theſe ex-
" curſions to afford ſatisfaction to my mind
" as well as health to my body, I cannot
" for the life of me enjoy the beauties of
" the country, or ſit at my eaſe, while the
" nobleſt animal of the brute creation is
" under the moſt excruciating and cruel
" tortures, that he may, by a velocity
" more rapid than can be pleaſing, bring
" me a certain ſtage at a certain hour.
" The poor creatures are allowed a very
" ſhort portion of time for their reſt, but
" juſt long enough to cool their limbs,
" which, by the ſtiffened ſtate they are
" then brought to, ſubjects them to the
" mercileſs blows of the horſekeeper to
" bring them again into their harneſs,
" where they are expoſed to the no leſs
" mercileſs coachman, who whips them

" on

" on till a fever relaxes every joint, and
" they are loaded with the accumulated
" pangs of torture and diſeaſe. I confeſs
" the weakneſs of my nature is ſuch, that
" were I to be gratified by the moſt beau-
" tiful ſcenery, were my body indulged in
" the moſt luxurious eaſe, and my mind
" enlightened by the moſt ſublime con-
" verſation, it could be no counterpoiſe
" for the feelings I ſhould experience at
" the ſufferings of theſe poor animals: but
" when, added to this, I ſhould be cram-
" med into a ſpace not half large enough
" to ſit in comfort, be whirled paſt the
" moſt beautiful proſpects without a poſſi-
" bility of ſeeing them, compelled to en-
" dure the dirt of the inſide paſſengers,
" and be annoyed by the diſcourſe of thoſe
" without, whoſe numbers are increaſed by
" the ſordid avarice of the coachman, till
" the roof is in danger of falling in upon
" you,—theſe, ſir, excluſive of the perils
" of an overturn, and numerous other ac-
" cidents, are my objections to a ſtage-
" coach,

" coach, a conveyance originally meant to
" be ſafe, pleaſant, and humane. It is
" the inhumanity likewiſe which operates
" on my mind againſt poſting: you are
" certainly yourſelf then more at your eaſe,
" but the poor horſes not a whit more;
" and you have the additional mortifica-
" tion to be an eye-witneſs of the injuries
" they receive. Thus, ſir, I have ex-
" plained my reaſons for prefering an un-
" couth vehicle, conſtructed for conve-
" nience rather than ſhow, to any more
" elegant, faſhionable, and rapid method
" of travelling; and when you ſee my
" horſes, for my ſervant rides one, which
" draws alternately, you will not be ſur-
" priſed at the length of time I have been
" coming from London."

Mr. Tracy ceaſed ſpeaking; and what-ever opinions his ſentiments had excited in his auditors, they were not expreſſed; every one preſerving a profound ſilence, which I was the firſt to break; for I muſt confeſs, ſo much did my ideas coincide with

with Mr. Tracy's, particularly in the treatment of horſes, that I could not help warmly applauding his ſentiments. Young Carroſet yawned, threw himſelf back in his chair, and ſaid, "Aye, why he believed a "ſtage-coach was but a bad conveyance; "but every one as they liked: for his "part he was partial to getting on." "Keep "moving, hey George?" ſaid the old man; while his lady-mother proteſted it quite ſhook her nerves to ſee how he drove ſometimes; but then to be ſure, ſhe added, the horſes were ſuch pretty creatures! Miſs Carroſet obſerved, that ſhe thought moderate travelling was beſt; but men were in general ſuch impatient creatures! This led to a converſation too trifling to relate. We concluded the evening with a dance. I was honoured with the hand of both Miſs Bullface and Miſs Carroſet in the courſe of the evening. They are rival beauties, but the latter has every perſonal advantage, though I am miſtaken if a great ſhare of duplicity does not pervade her mind. She

adapted

adapted her opinions to mine in too ſtudied a manner, however flattering the idea: I fear I did not make the returns ſhe ſeemed to be laying out for. Miſs Bullface too was not deficient in her modes of attraction; and the doctor, who was joined by his lady, whiſpered me that Miſs Carroſet was not juſt the character with whom they wiſhed their daughters to aſſociate; that ſhe had acquired a certain boldneſs from her French education; and her conduct towards Mr. St. Edward, who was a married man, was not ſtrictly decorous. I think I had obſerved this before; but were I inclined to indulge my vanity, I might chance to rival this benedict: I have, however, no ſuch intentions. My ſtay here will not be long. If I find Tracy, on a further acquaintance, to be the intelligent man I ſuppoſe him, it may be an inducement to keep me here a few days longer.

I wiſh to gain ſome information reſpecting our friend Fitzarnold: I cannot hear where he now is. He was ſome time

ſince

ſince in Staffordſhire, on a viſit at a gentleman's houſe in the neighbourhood of Mr. St. Edward: I have reaſon to think he is not there now. I named him to St. Edward, but he appeared to know nothing of him.

I have had a great deal of converſation with Tracy. He has a fund of knowledge, and is a very ſingular character. I have received more information from his opinions than I ever did before. He has deſcanted upon ſerious ſubjects in a manner which has led me to ſee them in a light entirely new. I am not, I hope, among the worſt of mankind, but I find I have much to reform; and I ſhall think myſelf indebted to his counſel for a clearer conſcience than I might otherwiſe have experienced. How much more is to be gleaned from his ſenſible well-timed remarks, than from the pride and conſequential nothings which flow from the lips of the ſtately Dr. Bullface. Surely, if pride ever appears in its moſt hateful form, it is

when

when displayed by an order of men, whose profession should be marked by humility, as one of the Christian virtues, more particularly exemplified in the life and doctrines of their great master. You see I have already profited by the lectures of my new acquaintance; not that I ever looked upon sacred truths in a light manner; but I am not going to sermonize, unless my letter should come under that denomination by its length, to which I will not add, except to inform you that I shall leave this place before a letter from you can reach me here; and always remain,

Truly yours,

CARRINGTON.

LETTER XXIII.

Miſs Carroſet to Miſs Baynard.

MY ſcheme upon Lord Robert Carrington has failed; I deſpiſe him. He is as ſilly and as ſqueamiſh as Mrs. St. Edward, and adopts all the old-faſhioned abſurd notions of that frumpiſh fellow Tracy. How ſick I ſhould be of a huſband who would be every moment giving me lectures upon propriety of conduct: O defend me from ſuch an one! Yes, I aſſure you Lord Robert is abſolutely pious, and bores one to death about principles of virtue and honour; very good things in their way, perhaps, but not fit to be brought and exhibited at a public place. I now relinquiſh all hopes of a coronet, and all its faſcinating appendages; I muſt content myſelf with being plain Mrs. St. Edward,

and

and to ſecure that I will ſpare neither time nor trouble. I have, as I told you I would, already thrown out ſome hints to St. Edward, in order to found a jealouſy, upon which I muſt build my fabric. I had made ſeveral attempts of this nature before I had ſo much intereſt in the cauſe as I now have, and merely for a matter of amuſement, and to promote a little dear miſchief; but he either had ſo little of jealouſy blended in his compoſition, or ſo implicit a confidence in his wife, (I know not which,) that he never appeared to underſtand any of my hints, and never wiſhed to have them explained. This, however, is of little conſequence; I have a grand effort in reſerve, and I think the time is now arrived when I ſhall put it in execution.

I love to tell you my plans; for though I ſhall abide by no deciſion but my own, I take a pleaſure in your approving and admiring my ingenuity. Know then, Maria, and as you hear be ſecret, that during the time I was on the viſit at

Arkley Caſtle, I went one day accidentally into Mrs. St. Edward's dreſſing-room: ſhe was not there, but on her table lay an unfiniſhed letter to ſome female friend, as I ſuppoſe, but it was marked by no particular addreſs, and might have been deſigned for either ſex. No matter how that was, it ſuited my purpoſe. I took the liberty of concealing it, and have preſerved it againſt a time when it might be of infinite uſe in my operations.

Yeſterday I aſked him if he did not think Mrs. St. Edward muſt be very dull in that old caſtle by herſelf; he ſaid, "Yes, it "muſt be dull;" but added, "you know "it was her own choice; ſhe might have "been here if ſhe pleaſed, therefore ſhe "can't complain of any reſtraint upon her "inclinations; and ſhe likes ſolitude, and "has various ways of amuſement." "And "do you think," I replied, "that ſhe had "no particular reaſon for wiſhing to ſtay "there by herſelf?" "No,—no other rea-"ſon than becauſe ſhe did not expect to "find

" find any pleaſure in coming here." " And " do you think," I replied, " that ſhe is " quite alone?" " Yes, I ſuppoſe ſo;— " who ſhould be with her there?" " Why " —but it may be only conjecture; and," I heſitatingly ſaid, " I would not on any " account give you ſuſpicions of circum- " ſtances which, perhaps, you would be " the laſt perſon to know, and of which " you ſeem ſo entirely ignorant, that—" I was going to proceed, but the ſpark was kindled, and it was not time to let it blaze yet. " What is it you mean? tell " me:—Do you know anything of which " I ought to be informed? Do not keep " me in ſuſpenſe." " Indeed Mr. St. Ed- " ward," returned I, with great gravity and conſequence thrown into my counte- nance, " it is a ſubject on which I muſt " beg to be excuſed ſpeaking, that is, " ſpeaking my real opinion. There is a " delicacy, nay, danger in mentioning ſub- " jects of this nature; and I would be the " laſt perſon in the world to give you ideas

" of Mrs. St. Edward's being partial—that " is, I mean, having a preference—a not " being exactly what you wiſh her." So ſaying, I left him to the workings of his fancy. I have began with a gentle doſe, the next ſhall be ſtronger; and I am certain from what I have obſerved, it will not fail in its operation. In the mean time, to you I will confeſs my weakneſs, and the reſtleſs jealouſy which pervades my active mind: it is this,—although I cannot build my own advancement upon any ſtructure but the ruin of Mrs. St. Edward, which muſt be the conſequence of St. Edward's jealouſy, yet does not that very jealouſy, neceſſary as it is to my deſign, imply a degree of love? Yes, where there is no love there can be no jealouſy; it is love's trueſt ſtandard; and ſuch are my fine feelings, that I cannot bear St. Edward ſhould retain one particle of that tender paſſion for any one object but myſelf.

Yet how to arrange my plans without raiſing theſe emotions I know not. If he has

has no jealouſy he has no love; and if he has no love he would have no jealouſy; then of courſe he could have no reſentment, the uſual concomitant of that paſſion; and reſentment, if well nurtured, will ſoon produce hatred: only I muſt wait theſe charming effects; and as I am the principal actor in the drama, I muſt obſerve the gradations of theſe paſſions, and with patience more than human be a witneſs to the expiring flames which once, and that but lately, twiſted the fetters of enamoured fancy, which, when once firmly united, muſt cauſe a pang to be undone. Yet ſuch a taſk is mine, Maria: but there is a neceſſity far more powerful than any claim I have yet mentioned. I am no whimperer; and as to love, my heart has long been ſteeled againſt its utmoſt incitements, and left callous to all its attacks; and beſides, I never intended to lead a ſingle life. St. Edward is the kind of huſband I can manage as I pleaſe, for I have gained an amazing aſcendency over him now; and

when once I can break off all his regard for that doll of a wife he has at preſent, I ſhall fear no rival. You ſhall hear what progreſs I make in my enterprize, and I have no doubt but ſucceſs will crown my wiſhes.

Adieu,

Ever yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

Buxton, Oct. 25.

LETTER XXIV.

Mrs. St. Edward to Mrs. Safforey.

Arkley Caſtle, October 27, 17—.

GLOOM and ſolitude, my dear Elinor, have again infected me with ſuperſtition and dread: I ſhould be aſhamed to confeſs my fears, or relate my weakneſs to any other but ſuch a dear friend. My ſpirits, whilſt they were engaged by paſſing events, or agitated by reſentment, were ſupported from

from that drooping languor which I now feel ſo very oppreſſive. I have had recourſe to books, to muſic, to drawing, beſides inſpecting domeſtic arrangements, and yet the day hangs heavy; and when the evenings begin to cloſe, which you know at this ſeaſon is early, I feel my ſpirits ſcarcely equal to encounter the many hours between that and my bed-time. Time and uſe would, perhaps, reconcile me to this ſolitude, and I might grow ſo enamoured of my own company as to wiſh for no other; but this is not all. This caſtle is calculated to inſpire terror. Laſt night I was greatly alarmed. I had been walking in the park as long as I deemed it ſafe to be alone; I had given way to a variety of melancholy recollections; I traced the opening of my early proſpects, with the pleaſing gaiety they then promiſed; I recalled the youthful days we had paſſed together; the innocent and delightful amuſements we had ſhared; the playful exploits of an object ever dear to my memory; and the harmleſs ſports in which this trio uſed to

engage: time was not then marked by leaden wings; ah no,—it flew with too much rapidity. I ſat ruminating on theſe paſt pleaſures, till the lengthening ſhadows began to depart; the owl hooted, which was returned by melancholy echos; the moon appeared riſing behind a dark cloud;

And drowſy tinklings lulled the diſtant folds.

My mind was in uniſon with the ſcene: I could have remained there for a much longer time, but fear impelled me to return to the caſtle. I retired to my dreſſing-room, where, after beguiling a few tedious hours, I prepared to go to bed. I had diſmiſſed Lucy, and was nearly undreſſed, when my ear was arreſted, as once before, by a few notes of ſoft muſic. As the ſound proceeded from under the window, I concealed my light in a cloſet; I wrapped my bedgown round me, and went on tip-toe to the window. I gently opened the ſhutter, and as the moon ſhone very bright, I could plainly diſtinguiſh a man,

whoſe

whoſe figure and appearance were not of an inferior order. I ſtarted, and drew back; I felt alarmed in a way I cannot deſcribe: my mind had been oppreſſed with unuſual lowneſs the preceding part of the evening, and the ſound of the muſic gave me a fear annexed to that one of ſupernatural lights and noiſes.

I ſtood for ſome minutes, as if recollecting myſelf; I felt afraid to approach the window a ſecond time; my trembling limbs would ſcarce ſupport me; and I plainly heard gentle footſteps paſſing to and fro'. I knelt down, I prayed for protection; and I felt my courage revive. I again ventured to the window; all was ſtill, and nothing appeared. I had almoſt aſſumed confidence enough to open it, but I inſtantly ſuppreſt the idea, as no curioſity could poſſibly juſtify hazarding myſelf to ſuch an expoſure; I therefore gently faſtened the ſhutter, and having reſumed my light, I ſearched every part of the room, the cloſet, and under

the bed; I faſtened the door, and I again addreſſed that Being, on whom alone we can rely for ſafety.

During the firſt part of the night, my mind dwelt upon a thouſand images of fear and diſmay; but towards morning, I ſunk into a ſweet and compoſed ſleep, which ſovereign balm ſo renovated my faculties, and reſtored my ſpirits, that I did not recollect the circumſtances of the preceding night with that degree of horror they had at firſt occaſioned. Nevertheleſs, my dear Elinor, I am extremely puzzled by the adventure. Were I inclined to give way to the ſuperſtitious opinions, which pervade the inhabitants of the caſtle, I could not in this inſtance allow my fancy to be deceived. The ſounds I heard were thoſe of ſome inſtrument, and the form I ſaw was that of an inhabitant of this world. Where or why he comes here is beyond my comprehenſion. I have not ſtirred out to-day, though it is uncommonly fine weather; yet I am not afraid; I ſee no reaſon

to

to be apprehenſive; for what ſhould any being attempt that could ſignify to me, and what advantage would be gained by alarming me? I have ſervants enough to protect me, and they ſeem well diſpoſed and attached. I could indeed wiſh that I had ſome female friend, to whom I could confide ſuch ſecrets as theſe; for I do not love to tell ſervants any thing that has the appearance of marvellous, they are ſo ready to add ſo much of their own. Had I told Lucy what I ſaw and heard laſt night, it would by this time have been magnified into a dozen men, with a band of muſic. I wiſh Mrs. Clifford could have come; but when her uncle is in ſo dangerous a ſtate, it would be cruel to deſire it. A ſtill dearer friend too would have been ſtill more deſirable; but I muſt likewiſe admit your excuſes, for I know there muſt be cogent reaſons, or you would not have allowed them to act againſt your wiſhes. I hope and truſt I am ſafe, and that this unknown, whoſe ſerenades ſo much alarm me, will

confine

confine himſelf to them alone, or what is ſtill better, to hope that I ſhall neither ſee or hear any thing more of him.

I believe there are few young women that are juſt in the ſame predicament as myſelf. I have been married little more than three months, to a man whoſe conduct at that time led me to believe he preferred me to all other women; I am not conſcious of having given him any reaſon to complain of my want of affection, or any other flagrant breach of duty; yet he has not only totally neglected me, but has ſhewn a decided preference to another, and has left me a prey to melancholy reflections, as well as expoſed to the dangers and attempts of the midnight aſſaſſin, or more dreaded invader of my peace. Yet I have not the moſt diſtant gueſs at the perſon of my nocturnal viſitor; but am inclined to ſuppoſe, that he is ſtill more formidable than a robber, inaſmuch as any intimation of a perſon of this deſcription watching me at ſuch an hour, would be more injurious to my reputation,

putation, than any deprivation of my property could poſſibly be; and where a woman has loſt her beſt protection, ſhe is left to the mercy of a thouſand wicked agents of malice and revenge, with no other ſhield but her own rectitude and innocence. Theſe are truths which make me very ſad; and there are moments when ſtill more acute reflections render my heart the ſeat of miſery. I am ſorry, my dear Elinor, to cloſe my letter with ſuch mournful ideas, but I feel an uncommon lowneſs of ſpirits, and the longer I write the more keenly I find they oppreſs me. I will, therefore, no longer dwell on ideas ſo painful, but with the moſt fervent good wiſhes bid you adieu.

Ever yours,

JULIA ST. EDWARD.

LETTER XXV.

Miſs Carroſet to Miſs Baynard.

Buxton, October 30, 17—.

MARIA! the fates work for me! nay, they improve upon my plan! This morning an expreſs arrived from Arkley that Mrs. St. Edward was gone off; the pious, proper, uniform Julia; ſhe that was held out as a pattern for her ſex, that looked with diſdain on every one who had not ſufficient art to affect her prudiſh affectation; yes, this fair paragon has eloped! When I told St. Edward I thought ſhe had ſome plan for wiſhing to remain alone at Arkley, I really did not ſuſpect ſhe had any. I thought I could diſcover that Lord Fitzarnold had a penchant for her, but ſo artfully did ſhe conceal her feelings, I never could diſcover that ſhe had the moſt

diſtant

diſtant partiality for him; and I frequently wondered at it, when I conſidered the ſlights ſhe received from her huſband, than which nothing is more likely to make the gentleſt ſpirits retort; but theſe opinions muſt be entirely confined to your own breaſt, for to you alone I confide them. I hold a very different language to others; I pretend to have known her propenſities long ago, and ſhew no ſort of ſurpriſe at her elopement; and when St. Edward came to tell me the news, he ſeemed mad with rage, jealouſy, and compaſſion: yes,—with compaſſion; for he accuſed himſelf for having neglected and forſaken the ſweeteſt creature in the world, whom he had left a prey to the vile machinations of ſome concealed enemy. This, Maria, was the language he held forth to me, even to me his diſtinguiſhed chere amie. Was it in human patience to endure ſuch mortification? Yet I commanded a coolneſs I did not feel. Now was the moment to fix my fate for ever. I told him he was deceived; that to my certain

certain knowledge Mrs. St. Edward had carried on a ſecret intrigue with ſomebody for a long time; that ſhe ſtaid there alone the better to facilitate her amour; and that I had a convincing proof of her infidelity in my pocket, which ſhould have remained for ever concealed, had not this flagrant act of her elopement made it unjuſt to conceal any longer ſuch proof of her iniquity. In ſaying this, I drew forth the unfiniſhed letter I had purloined from her dreſſing-room, which ran thus:

"Mr. St. Edward means to accompany "the family who have been our viſitors "into Derbyſhire. I know you wiſh to "enjoy my company alone, and then in-"deed it will be on every account moſt de-"ſirable. I know the tender concern you "take in my intereſts, and I anticipate "with ſincere affection the happy hours "we ſhall paſs together, uninterrupted by "any other viſitors. I have a thouſand "things to ſay to you, and I depend on the "reciprocal communications you may have

"for

" for me. Loſe not a moment, my dear " friend, in coming to me when I ſhall in- " form you I am alone, and be aſſured that " my affectionate regards can never be " altered, although—"

When St. Edward had read this fragment, which he was well aſſured was the identical hand-writing of his wife, all the tenderneſs which a few minutes before had found a place in his heart, at once gave way to the moſt bitter invectives againſt her: and I came in myſelf for a ſhare of his anger, for he aſked me, with the fury of a madman, why I did not ſhew it him before? and why I did not inform him of every thing I knew before we left Arkley, that he might have detected the wretched culprits, and if poſſible have preſerved her's and his own honour?

I knew not what arguments to uſe in defence of my own conduct, and to corroborate the evidence, which already appeared ſo much againſt her, but required farther proofs to criminate her character. In reality, I ſuppoſe there was ſomething between

between her and Lord Fitzarnold, and I hope there was, becauſe it will in that caſe bring things ſooner to an iſſue, and I ſhall feel my conſcience more eaſy than I ſhould had ſhe been entirely innocent; for though I do not in general allow qualms of that ſort to cramp my enterprifing genius, yet if ſhe had been accuſed and ſacrificed quite wrongfully, I ſhould not have felt ſo comfortable when I am the miſtreſs of Arkley Caſtle, leſt if ſhe had broke her heart, her ghoſt ſhould have taken it into its head to terrify and alarm me in that place, which ſeems to be the reſidence of evil ſpirits; not that I ſhall ever reſide there for any length of time, for I ſhall make St. Edward take a houſe in London; I ſhould be moped to death to live entirely in that odious caſtle. But it ſhall not remain in the ſtate it now is, for I will have it entirely new moddled; it ſhall not look like a place for the reſidence of hobgoblins; all the old-faſhioned trumpery, and all the old inhabitants ſhall turn out; I will leave no relics of antiquity:

quity;—but I fear theſe ſchemes will be ſome time in adjuſting; it is a long time before a divorce is compleated;—thoſe abominable lawyers are ſo tedious. I cannot doubt but there will be proof ſufficient now they are gone off together, but there muſt be ſo many tireſome forms. I think I could make a new code of laws quite as beneficial to ſociety without ſo much parade.

Well, St. Edward will, however, loſe no time, for he is gone as faſt as his horſes can carry him, but not ſo faſt as my impatient ſpirit would convey him. I ſhall be miſerable till I hear from him; and he has promiſed to write the moment he has any intelligence to communicate, which I think muſt be before long. I ſuppoſe we ſhall leave this place too very ſoon, and make the beſt of our way to London; but if anything particular occurs, you ſhall hear from me again; and believe me always

Moſt truly yours,

CHARLOTTE CARROSET.

LETTER XXVI.

Mrs. Safforey to Mrs. Clifford.

THE moſt extraordinary intelligence, my dear madam, has this moment reached me;—pray heaven it may not be true, and yet I have every reaſon to fear it is. Mrs. St. Edward is miſſing! our dear Julia! What villain has dared to moleſt innocence like her's? You know my fears, and how much they were excited on account of my poor brother, whoſe return I have been hourly expecting; but he is clear of all ſuſpicion relating to this event, for the ſhip in which he embarked is not yet arrived. I know not on whom to fix my ſurmiſe. She had ſo few acquaintance, has led ſuch a retired life, that I can form no gueſs; and yet from her laſt I was not eaſy: ſomebody

was

was lurking about the caſtle the night before ſhe wrote her laſt letter, which ſhe concluded with unuſual low ſpirits, as if ſhe had a preſentiment of what was to happen; not that I mean to attach any guilt to her,—no, ſhe is as pure as human nature can be.

I have thought of Lord Fitzarnold, who was lately viſiting at Baintree Park, but from all the accounts I can collect, he has left the country ſome time. I know not what to think. I hear an expreſs is ſent to St. Edward at Buxton; he had no buſineſs to be abſent. The ſervants can give no ſatisfactory account; they are all as much perplexed as I am. A labouring man, whoſe family are much indebted to the charity of Julia, brought me the firſt intelligence. He was ſent by Lucy, her maid, who ſaid ſhe never had ſtirred out the whole day; that when ſhe left her at night ſhe appeared perfectly compoſed; talked to her during the time ſhe was undreſſing

dreſſing about a poor woman in the village, to whom Lucy had been ſent in the courſe of the day to carry child-bed linen and other things, as ſhe was near lying-in; that in the morning, not hearing her miſtreſs's bell ring at the uſual hour, and having waited ſome time beyond it, ſhe ventured to rap gently at the door of her chamber, and not having any anſwer, ſhe rapped ſtill louder, but hearing no return, ſhe called, and no anſwer being given, ſhe then began to be alarmed. There was a drop-bolt to the door, which, upon trying to open, ſhe found was down; and ſhe felt ſo frightened and ſo fully perſuaded her dear miſtreſs was dead, that ſhe ſtood for a minute and cryed; but recollecting herſelf, ſhe called for help, and ran down to the reſt of the ſervants with her alarming account, and they returning with her, the door was inſtantly forced open, and the room found empty. It did not appear that Mrs. St. Edward had been in bed,

nor

nor was there the leaſt trace by which they could mark by what means ſhe had departed. Various were their conjectures, and having made a ſearch throughout the park, gardens, and offices, they gave up all hopes of diſcovery, and diſpatched ſervants different ways to inform thoſe moſt nearly concerned of this ſad and unaccountable cataſtrophe. This is the ſubſtance of the account the man brought to me, only that I have omitted relating his belief that ſhe is carried away by ſupernatural power, to prove which, he related wonderful ſights he had witneſſed, and as firmly credited. For my own part, I am loſt in wonder at the circumſtances, ſuch as he has related them; but can form no decided opinion till I hear a more rational account. I dare ſay there are clues which might lead to ſome inveſtigation, were a proper examination to be made; but until ſuch can be effected, we muſt ſubmit to that patience which only can make us bear a ſuſpence al-

moſt inſupportable. I know you will join with me in prayers for the preſervation of the moſt deſerving of women; and believe me,

Ever yours,

ELINOR SAFFOREY.

Ledcombe, Oct. 30.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LANE, MINERVA PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

Just published,

AZALAIS AND AIMAR.

THREE VOLUMES, 12MO. PRICE 9s. SEWED.

A pleasing and interesting kind of legend, in which the manners of the age of chivalry are portrayed with much judgment and effect.

London Review, Nov. 1799.

Just published,

REGINALD;

OR,

THE HOUSE OF MIRANDOLA.

IN THREE VOLUMES, 12MO. PRICE 12S. SEWED.

This is profeſſedly an imitation of the manner of Mrs. Radcliffe's Udolpho; and, in our opinion, not an unſucceſsful one. The ſtory is well told, and is calculated to promote the exerciſe of the moral virtues.

London Review, Jan. 1800.

BRITISH LIBRARY